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NON-PROFIT PUNK ROCK

RAZZORCAKE

#94



Trap Girl

Gentlemen
Prefer
Blood



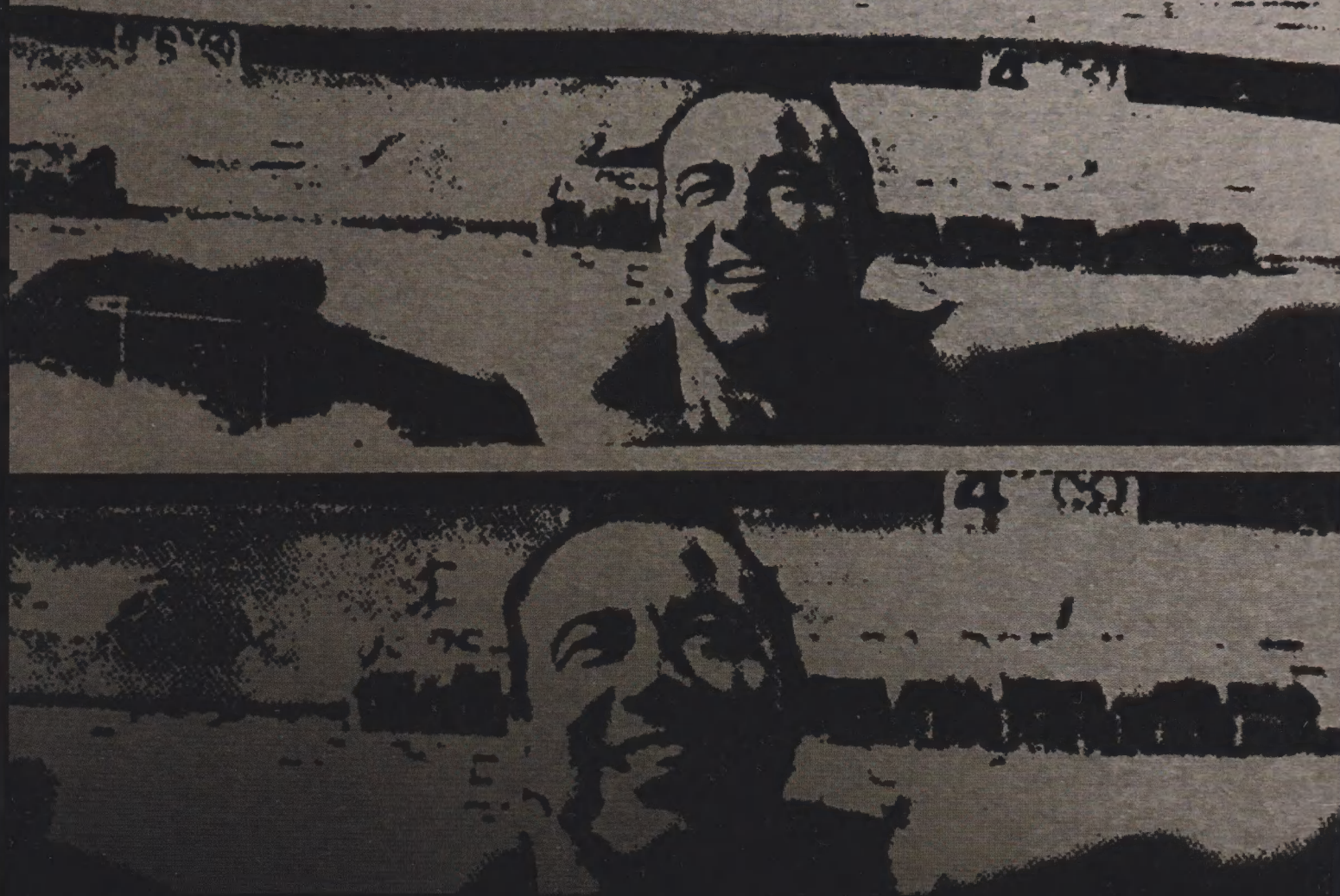
Warriors

implausible, unsung First-wave ELA punk

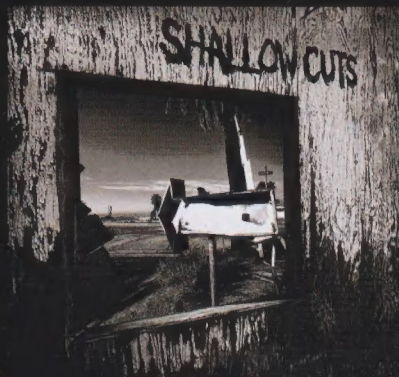
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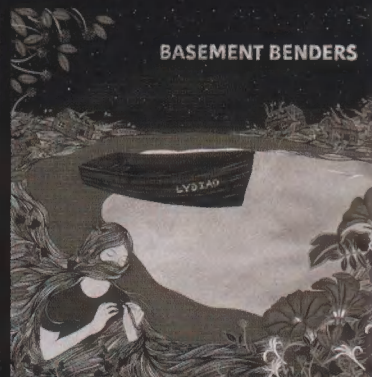
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Razorcake is a magazine. A magazine that believes in the separation between content and profit. A magazine that strives to amplify the unheard voice. The unique story. The perspective you could have never imagined, because it could only come from someone who has lived a life different from your own. These narratives should be far more commonplace than they are. In a small way, we hope to change that.

Diversity will only improve DIY punk. If you know of a story that needs to be heard, *Razorcake's* doors are open. While we have high standards for what goes to print, everything will be considered, and feedback will be offered.

Corporate media and the internet troll-mongers can rot to death in the sinking pit of shit that they've created. We want to be proud of what we've created. We want to create something that people can be proud to be a part of.

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Broken, Repairs

I've intentionally been spending a lot of time alone lately. Well, not entirely alone. I've been having long conversations, mostly with ghosts. Together, we're busy reshaping the crappy past into something usable for the future. I wanted to build against the sadness that hasn't completely left.

When my uncle Mike passed several years back, I inherited some of his tools. Tools I was vaguely familiar with how to use. My uncle Mike was an insanely smart guy. A nuclear physicist. His tools were in great shape. Instruction manuals came with many of the tools. I'm no stranger to manual labor; I just wouldn't call myself "skilled."

As I've mentioned previously, my marriage of seven years ended terribly. My ex-wife and I, as part of mediation, submitted full financial disclosures. Long story short: when she left, the house was essentially bare. Many broken, rotting, unfinished projects remained.

Not the least of which was me.

Those initial days after her departure, much of what I owned was on the floor. When I cleared out the piles of junk she'd left behind, I found a cabinet she'd sawed in half with a reciprocating saw. It looked like a bottle was slashed down the face of it. I think it was too big for her studio, so she cut it down, but am unsure of her thought process. I found another cabinet. Over time, I found doors. Some, but not all, hinges. The cabinets were missing pieces—a top, drawer sliders. I cleared out a space in the backyard. The first thing I wanted to do was remove her fingerprints from my day-to-day. I sanded the wood. I stained. I ordered small parts.

I started talking to ghosts daily when I learned how to use the radial-arm saw my uncle left me. I asked my uncle the difference

between out-rips and cross-cuts. Which saw blade to use for different types of woods. How to feed the wood through. I swore at him when the circuit popped or smoke rose from the blade as it stalled in the wood. I thanked him for a pretty-much-straight eight-foot-long cut.

I'm beyond fortunate. Both of my parents are still alive and my father is one of the best scavengers I know. He brought over salvaged plywood, two-by-fours, used tools.

I placed two of the cabinets I resurrected in the front room. I put another in the guest room. They are all essentially empty, but they've gotten me off the floor. I made heavy-duty shelves for the LPs that remain after selling off enough to pay my ex-wife off. This last weekend I asked Uncle Mike how I could square off the fence on the saw's worktable as I looked down the line of my 7" shelving. It's serviceable. It's just not professional and I was melancholic. I took my time and it still isn't quite straight.

But then, Uncle Mike reminded me that I was making tangible things. Things I made with my own hands from raw materials instead of buying more expensive, store-bought things. That I made something useful from scraps, from discards, from thinking it through and still making mistakes, from being open to others' love and generosity.

And then a bulb flickered above me. Fuck me. That's what we've been doing for almost sixteen years for the pages of this zine to even exist. We have to create the spaces so that we can hold in our hands evidence of a handmade, imperfect, real existence—inside of a world of people wanting to break you, from a world of broken things.

—Todd Taylor

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Please tell me
you remember
kindness and
joy, you cool
motherfuckers.

—Scott McClanahan *Crapalachia*

This issue is dedicated
to the memory of Erik Petersen.

THANK YOU: Spirit and soul—that's something that doesn't come with a degree or a CV—and Bob Rob's got it. Thanks for nailing the illustration for the cover of the Qualls brothers and thanks to Rachel Murray Framingheddu for lining up the studio session and taking photos; K's harder sometimes to not go for shock, but for respect—thanks to Codey Richards for his illo. in Donna's column; Nerb would know the special power that allows a superhero like Keith Morris to replicate himself thanks to Becky Rodriguez for her illo. in Jim's column; Look at the direction of that tape. That's ninety-nine percent of our wages—thanks to Steve Thueson for his illo. in Cassio's column; Hey Patrick, love that shot; The missing link between the Meatmen and the Monkees thanks to Alex Barrett for his illo. in Nerb's column; Danny Rust, thank you for removing the scarf from the mic. stand and the hippie from Dale's column illo.; Cats flipping people off=me laughing=thanks Holly Wood for her guest comic; [slaps head] have Mary Poppins and the Rhythm Chicken ever been in the same place at the same time? No. Start the investigation; Thanks to Mitch Clem for his illo. in Jennifer Whiteford's column. I really enjoy having you back in our pages regularly, Mitch; I first read it as dangling chin hair but then realized it was the far side of a Hurley (Minutemen) swoop cut in the ninth and tenth panels thanks to Sam Grinberg for his guest comic; Dirty Diamond Dogs of glittering, feral awesomeness thanks to Candace Hansen, Henry Zavala, and Lauren Denitzio for the Trap Girl interview, photos, and layout; They never released their music. That is the divide between KBD and near-total obscurity. That fact doesn't make their story any less legit or powerful thanks to Jimmy Alvarado, Jesus Volo, Madeline Bridenbaugh, Rachel Murray Framingheddu, and Eric Baskauskas for the Warriors interview, introduction, transcription, photos, and layout; Maggot brain (literally) and Tauntaun sleeping bag (with guts) thanks to Megan G. Razzetti, Gabby Gonzalez, and Becky Bennett for the Gentlemen Prefer Blood interview, photo, and layout.

"Anthems about being bad asses, gay sex in the park, golddigging, and hating working in the mall." Candace Hansen reviewing Fatty Cakes And The Puff Pastries' Feminist Gold 2K cassette. Thanks to 93's rotation of music, zines, books, and video reviewers: Matt Average, Jon Mule, Kayla Greet, Garrett Barnwell, Mark Twistworthy, Nerb, Craven Rock, MP Johnson, Indiana Laub, Sal Lucci, Ty Stranglehold, Nicole X., Mike Frame, Art Ettinger, Rich Cocksedge, Kurt Morris, Lyle, Ryan Nichols, Camille Reynolds, Simone Carter, Lord Kvoldulfr, Steve Adamyk, Chad Williams, Sean Koopenick, Jimmy Alvarado, Kelley O'Death, Matt Soward, Paul J. Comeau, Juan Espinosa, Billups Allen, Vincent, Sean Arenas, Jackie Rusted, Bryan Static, Keith Rosson, Ian Wise, Chris Terry, Jim Joyce, Michael T. Fournier, Jim Woster, Designated Dale, Matthew Hart, and Tricia Ramos.

DIY punk can't be fully captured, understood, or expressed by men. If you're a woman, womyn, girl, grrrl, transgender/agender/non-binary/genderqueer writer who's knowledgeable about punk, punctual, and open to editorial processes, drop us a line about doing reviews, interviews, articles, or webcolumns for Razorcake. Diversity will only make us a better punk publication. We support the male allies, but let's be real, we need a more diverse voice. Please help us out. (razorcake.org/contact-us)



A new Razorcake volunteer doing their puuuuuurrrrrt | photo by Griffin Wynne

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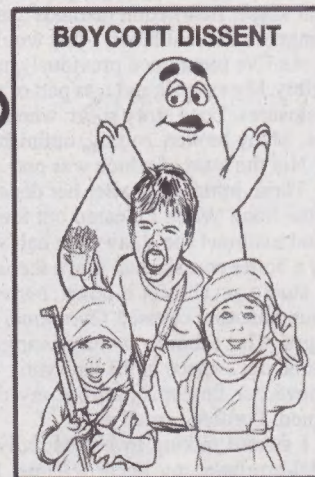
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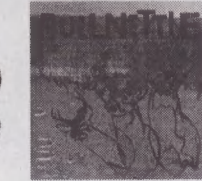
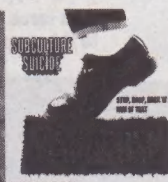
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The following folks stepped forward to help us do our part over the past two months. Without their help, Razorcake wouldn't be what it is:

Todd Taylor, Daryl Gussin, Candice Tobin, Kari Hamanaka, Matthew Hart, Donna Ramone, Rishbha Bhagi, Chris Baxter, Steve Couch, Megan Pants, Phill Legault, Sean Carswell, Skinny Dan, Katy Spining, Jimmy Alvarado, Josh Rosa, Robert El Diablo, Mark McBride, James Hernandez, Alice Bag, Marty Ploy, Rachel Murray Framingheddu, Rene Navarro, Billy Kostka III, Derek "Ramones chokehold" Whipple, Jason Willis, Janeth Galaviz, Adrian Chi, Matt Average, Ever Velasquez, Joe Dana, Christina Zamora, Juan Espinosa, Meztlil Hernandez, Sean Arenas, Aaron Kovacs, Julia Smut, Jenn Witte, Dave Eck, Tim Burkert, Jeff Proctor, Nighthawk, Toby Tober, Sal Lucci, Jennifer Federico, Jennifer Whiteford, Kayla Greet, Marcos Siref, Steve Thueson, Evan Wolff, Cassie J. Sneider, Bill Pinkel, Kurt Morris, Laura Collins, Eric Baskauskas, Bianca, Rhea Tepp, Russ Van Cleave, John Di Marco, Michael T. Fournier, Samantha Mc Bride, Simon Sotelo, Susan de Placo, Bryan Static, John Miskelly, Genesis Bautista, Andy Garcia, Camylle Reynolds, Becky Bennett, Craven Rock, Replay Dave, Adam Ali, Matt Sweeting, Chris Devlin, Codey Richards, Ryan Nichols, Aimee Pijpers, Liz Mayorga, Brad Dwyer, MP Johnson, Mor Fleisher, Ryan Leach, Tim Brooks, Patrick Houdek, Louis Jacinto, Chris Boarts Larson, J.V. McDonough, Isaac Thotz, Kat Jetson, Noah Wolf, Cahnne Galletta, Jon Mule, Chris Terry, Ryan Geletin, Rosie Gonca, Alex Cady, Aaron Zonka, Rick V., Kelly O'Grady, Pete Stapleton, Rachel Gouk, Alex Harris, Rodrigo V., Cathy Hannah, Sam Grinberg, Lukas Myhan, Holly Wood, Ollie Mikse, Melanie Matranga, Bungee Degrady, Dylan Davis, Becky Rodriguez, Gabby Gonzalez, Keith Rosson, Megan Razzetti, Paul Silver, Julie A. Ferguson, Matt Werts, Stacy Medina, David Ensminger, Danny Rust, Adel Souto, Griffin Wynne, Clara Acosta, Zohra Kaka, Dolly Chavez, and Jamie L. Rotante.

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This issue is dedicated to to the October 10th wedding anniversary of Yvonne and Dale.



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NEVER LET ME FORGET DONNA RAMONE

The guilt I still feel
over the Columbine
massacre is
intense.

Tap Three Mana to Cast “Strength and Elightenment”

Although a columbine is a beautiful flower and common street name, the only thing most of us think of when hearing the word is the April 1999 shooting at Columbine High School in Colorado. The single event upset and terrified the entire nation—well, almost the entire nation. One small goth high school girl (who grew up and started writing for *Razorcake*) was the exception. The guilt I still feel over the Columbine massacre is intense. I had nothing to do with it and never knew anyone involved in it, but I overwhelmingly benefitted from it. After the world learned that two ostracized and bullied goth kids murdered thirteen people, everyone started being nice to me.

Awful, I know, but true. Prior to the events in Columbine I was beat up, trash canned, or had things thrown at me every day in high school. I regularly cut gum out of my hair because someone would purposefully spit it out on me. I asked teachers if I could leave two minutes early so I would literally have a running start to my next class and could avoid getting hit in the head with pennies. I knew what bathrooms were the cleanest and least used, so no one would see me rinse the milk and soda off my clothes after lunch. Football players tackled me into fences, color guard hit me with their flags, cheerleaders told everyone I was a lesbian who ate dead animals, and teachers told me I was a mess and a waste. Even the older, “cool” goths told me they would stab me if they ever found me alone. I was small, scared, and dressed up like a witch. I was an incredibly easy target. High school was truly hell.

Sure, part of me wanted to see the place burn (and to be honest, some of me still does). I watched *Carrie* and *The Craft* a lot, and occasionally daydreamed of using mind powers to blast some jerk with a fire hose or make a shthead’s hair fall out. No part of me wanted to kill anyone, though, not even in my fantasies. Sure, I was angry, but I’m not violent. I didn’t want to fight, I just wanted to scream. I almost exclusively dreamed of my classmates coming to me, ugly-crying on their knees, saying they were so sorry for hurting me and begging for my forgiveness. Really, that’s all I wanted—an apology and to be left alone to read my ever-growing Anne Rice library.

Near the end of my sophomore year, my dreams unfortunately came true. The

Columbine High School massacre was unprecedented in its horror. At the time, no one considered school shootings an actual possibility. The only place safer than school was your own home. People on campus were rightfully on edge. The next day, every set of eyes was on me, and it made me more anxious than usual. The tension was overwhelming in every class. It especially radiated from teachers. No one spoke to me, no one made eye contact with me, and no one even breathed near me. I hoped the look in their eyes was the realization that the bullying they had done was wrong and there could be consequences to their actions. I realized later they were probably terrified I might shoot them. April 21, 1999 was the first day in nearly two years that I wasn’t harassed—and I felt so guilty over how overjoyed I was.

A day or two later, someone had tagged “TCM” on a bathroom wall. I was immediately rounded up and taken in by school authorities to be questioned. I was confused, mostly.

“TCM? Turner Classic Movies? My favorite channel?”

“Don’t play dumb. ‘Trench Coat Mafia.’ Who did this? Was it you?”

Only when looking it up for this column did I learn about the supposed Trench Coat Mafia. It was the self-given name of a group of older, graduated guys from Columbine High School. They had given themselves that goofy name after one got a trench coat as a gift from his mom. Only one of them vaguely knew one of the shooters personally. There was essentially no correlation, but the media was desperate to make out anything “dark” or “weird”—including music and video games—to be part of the same circle that included the Columbine murderers. I did not have a trench coat (unless you count this fantastic vampiric lace ensemble I still have) but some of the few friends I had did. I spent that afternoon insisting no one I knew was planning to kill anyone. As far as I could tell, the only thing a trench coat indicated was that the wearer played *Magic: The Gathering*. Also, no, *Magic: The Gathering* was not indicative of a person committing an act of violence. It’s just an obnoxiously complex card game we enjoyed playing everyday at lunch. I offered to show them my Green/Blue “sprites and fairies” deck and my Black/White “death

and angels” deck (yes, I named my decks). They were not impressed.

Unsure of how to handle any of this and looking to skip some classes, I went to peer counseling. The perfect way to avoid work, it was a private room where students could discuss problems with classmates. You signed in, talked to someone about anything bothering you, and your missed class was excused. I was paired with the incredibly popular blonde older sister of someone I had known since elementary school (but who definitely didn’t talk to me then). I opened up and talked like she wasn’t about to spit on me. She, in turn, spoke to me like I was just another friend. She asked me about the “TCM” in the bathroom. I rolled my eyes and groaned. “That’s the dumbest shit I’ve ever heard. You know that’s the name of the old movie channel, right?” We laughed really loudly together. A friend from science class, another peer counselor, poked her head in, wanting to know why we were laughing. She decided to sit and join us. I was floored when they both said my clothes were cool and meant it. They didn’t realize how badly I was being treated and were disgusted. A bridge was being built between the rest of the student body and me. I was sorrowful that it took a mass murder to make it happen.

The following year, people started introducing themselves and talking to me far more often than making fun of me or hurting me. At the same time, I started to feel more powerful and sure of myself. It might have been because I was older, or it might have been because I now struck irrational fear into the hearts of my enemies. I stood up for myself and stood up for anyone else I saw getting picked on. I didn’t hate school as much because school didn’t hate me back. By senior year, the worst bullies had graduated, learned to leave me alone, or were friendly with me. I went out of my way to befriend all the younger misfits and made sure anyone bullying them was called out for their shit behavior. No one was going to get treated the way I had been, not on my watch. I was going to use my powers for good and be the guardian of the marginalized. As I excitedly got ready leave behind this chapter of life, I discovered that I had been nearly unanimously voted as the yearbook’s “Most Eccentric” senior favorite.



CODEY RICHARDS

Sure, I was angry, but I'm not violent. I didn't want to fight, I just wanted to scream.

My entire graduating class of over a thousand students had democratically found me to be their favorite weirdo. At the time I was pissed because I didn't want to be immortalized as 2001's "freak of the year," but now I get it. People don't vote in people they hate or fear as favorites. They vote in people they enjoy. The dumbshit "eccentric" title was just the yearbook's way of celebrating the most unique individuals. There was always one kid who managed to completely stand out, simply by being themselves. Would I have been voted favorite if it hadn't been for Columbine? Would I have found my voice

and stood up for myself and others? Would everyone have eventually stopped attacking me at school? Maybe. It's hard for me to look back and not be overwhelmed by the direct correlation between the shooting and my life immediately becoming better.

Back then, I was stupid and used to silently thank the killers for saving my life. Today, I don't think those monsters are owed anything, but I still feel guilty for all the benefits I'm sure I reaped. Now, I understand it's the victims whom I should silently thank. They're the reason why everyone took pause and felt sorrow. They're the reason why my

life became undeniably better. I'd like to send out a simple message to the people truly responsible for bringing me strength and happiness: To all the victims of Columbine, living and dead, thank you. Thank you, thank you, thank you. You have my untold gratitude and love. I promise, with all the strength I have, to continue shaping the world into the kind of place where something like Columbine cannot happen again.

—Donna Ramone



LAZY MICK

JIM RULAND

He does it
his way
because he
loves doing it.

So Heavy, Man: *Getting Down and Dirty with Keith Morris*

On August 30, 2016, Keith Morris published a memoir about his forty years as a vocalist for punk bands like Black Flag, Circle Jerks, and OFF! It's called *My Damage*, features an illustration by the legendary Raymond Pettibon, and has my name on the cover.

That last part's not a typo: I co-wrote the book with Keith.

It sounds like a dream job—and it was—but the last time I checked, it wasn't a dream. This really happened, and I still can't believe it.

Most musicians who write books work with a journalist with whom they share the credit or they hire an uncredited ghostwriter. *My Damage* is Keith's story told as only Keith can tell it. My role was to gather the stories and get them all in the right order.

So how did I get this gig?

It's a long story.

Brendan Mullen, the late, great founder of the Masque, approached Keith and told him he was going to get him a book deal. Brendan had had some success editing the oral histories *We Got the Neutron Bomb*, *Lexicon Devil*, and *Whores*, but in 2009 Brendan had a stroke and passed away. Keith being Keith, he assumed that was the end of that.

A few years later, Ben Schafer, editor at Da Capo Press, wondered aloud to my agent if Keith would be interested in writing a book. My agent promptly told Ben, "I've got the perfect person for you!" and a few weeks later, I sat down with Keith and Ben for lunch and we pitched him the idea.

It was kind of a weird meeting. Ben and I did most of the talking. I told Keith I was a fan. I told him I'd written a few books. I told him I write for *Razorcake* and before that I wrote for *Flipside*.

That got his attention. A few days later I got an email from the Hotmail account of "Dr. Keith Morris" that read, "Let's do this!" followed by what I would learn is Keith's trademark sign off: RAAAAAWWWWWWWKKKKKK!

TL;DR: I got the gig thanks to *Razorcake*.

The first step was to write a book proposal, which is basically an outline and some sample chapters. The biggest challenge in co-writing a memoir is getting the subject's voice down. To do that, I had to spend some time with Keith. Make that a lot of time. And I learned a great deal about the man who

changed punk in Southern California and beyond. So what's Keith really like?

I'll tell you. Keith likes to talk. This will come as no surprise to anyone who has heard Keith ramble in between songs during a show or during a radio appearance. Keith has a lot to say. He's been around for a long time and has many opinions about art, politics, science, and—of course—music.

I don't think there are very many people who have worked in the music business for as long as Keith who are as enthusiastic about music. His absolute favorite thing to do is go to a record store and flip the bins. It's hard to find a band that Keith doesn't have an opinion about, new or old. He has an encyclopedic knowledge of not only rock singers and vocalists but also the musicians who back them and the producers who make the magic happen in the studio. *My Damage* references hundreds of bands, but only a fraction of them are punk.

He has opinions about Pearl Jam and Procol Harum, Boris and Bon Jovi, and he's not shy about sharing them. Keith once told Eddie Vedder that he wasn't crazy about Eddie's music, though he held Pearl Jam's first album in high regard. This was moments before OFF! opened for Pearl Jam in front of over 100,000 people in England.

I remember one time I stumbled across a list of the year's best punk rock records on Pitchfork. It was weighted heavily toward Chicago bands so I clicked on some of the links, bought one of the records, and downloaded it to my collection. I think it was *Raspberry Bulbs*.

When I went to Keith's house that week, I saw that he'd seen the same list, but instead of clicking his way through the picks, he'd copied it down in black Sharpie on the back of an envelope. When he had free time, he typed in the name of the band and listened to the song on his computer. If he didn't like it, he crossed it off his list. If he liked it, he left it on the list to take with him to the record store so he could buy it on vinyl. That's Keith in a nutshell: a mix of old technology and new.

Keith has connections at music labels all over town. Some of his oldest friends run huge music organizations. He worked as an A&R assistant at V2 records. He knows how the system works. He could pick up the phone or fire off an email and have any record, reissue, or box set sent to him, but he doesn't. He does it his way because he loves doing it.

Keith also loves making lists. He probably has dozens of lists going at any given time. Lists of people to call. Lists of things to talk about for the book. Lists of things to do. They're all written in black all caps letters and sit atop various piles of newspapers and magazines that get moved from the couch to the coffee table and eventually make their way to the floor. One day it occurred to me that Keith's apartment is like a stage with set lists for his life scattered across the floor.

As for food, I never saw Keith cook a meal or brew a pot of coffee, two of his major passions. For someone so slender, Keith doesn't miss many meals. A big part of managing his diabetes is eating regularly and eating well. That means no junk food. He likes simple American, Mexican, and Persian meals made with fresh ingredients.

Almost every one of our meetings began with breakfast or lunch at a restaurant or café and Keith always picked up the tab. Occasionally, he would be in the bathroom when the check arrived, which allowed me to swoop in and cover the bill, but he always insisted on paying. He is unstintingly generous in this regard.

He is also a good tipper and is friendly to wait staff. Before he got sick and was diagnosed with diabetes, Keith worked at Millie's where he bussed tables and helped out wherever he was needed. And at many of the places that he eats in his neighborhood he is waited on by struggling actors, artists, and musicians. Keith understands what that's like and does his part.

Keith has lived in the same building in Los Feliz for over twenty years. He rents an apartment and has a roommate. His walls are decorated with rock posters and with more stacked against the wall. His refrigerator is covered in stickers. Above the fireplace hangs a massive painting that will be instantly recognizable to fans of Midget Handjob: it's the art for the album *Midnight Snack Break at the Poodle Factory*, which is the worst-selling album in Epitaph's history. Some people would see the painting as the reminder of a failure, but that's not how Keith is wired. If he thought the painting—which features a poodle with a boner—was cool enough to put on a record, why wouldn't he want it on his wall?

That's just the kind of guy Keith is. He has a great deal of respect for musicians and the music they make, but doesn't listen to



BECKY RODRIGUEZ | INK-SKETCH.TUMBLR.COM

The way to deal with the people you respect and admire and have the good fortune to meet is to want nothing of them.

his own records and can't tell you what year they came out. He told me one afternoon he's not obsessed with his own mythology and he meant it. In *My Damage*, he rips one of his own records to shreds.

Keith is cult famous. He's a rock star without the trappings of stardom. On any given day, you'll see Keith hoofing around town with a backpack that contains his insulin supply and the clipboard he uses to track his glucose level before every single meal. He's very approachable and happy to give a wave or a fist bump to passersby, but if he's on the street it ~~means~~ he's going

somewhere and if he's on his way to eat, he doesn't have time to stop and chat. If his glucose crashes he'll be hypoglycemic and won't have the energy and concentration to write, record, practice, or play. Plus, he'll be miserable. It's that simple.

Except it usually isn't. One thing I learned from walking around with Keith in places like Chinatown, Hollywood, and Hermosa Beach is that everyone wants something from him. A handshake, a hug, an autograph, a photo, an autograph and a photo and a benefit show. It's relentless. I don't know how that cannot change you as a person.

If you meet Keith, and he's somewhat wary, it's because he's waiting to see what you want from him because almost everyone he meets wants something.

This was a very valuable lesson. The way to deal with the people you respect and admire and have the good fortune to meet is to want nothing of them. That's when they open up to you. That's when they tell you their story.

—Jim Ruland

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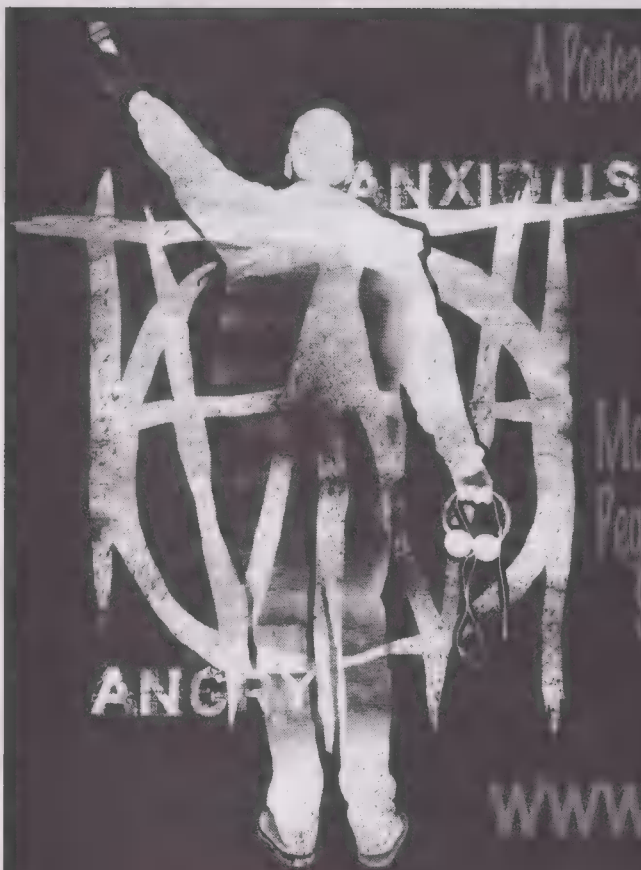
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MY SEVENTY-SEVENTH COLUMN FOR RAZORCAKE BY BEN SNAKEPIT

THE WORLD HAS SEEMED
LIKE SUCH A HORRIBLE,
UGLY PLACE LATELY.



WELL, HERE'S A STORY
THAT WILL HOPEFULLY
CHEER YOU UP A BIT.



A FEW DAYS AGO, I
WAS DRIVING ON THE
INTERSTATE.



IT WAS RUSH HOUR.
BUMPER-TO-BUMPER TRAFFIC
NOT MOVING.



FINALLY THERE WAS A
BREAK, AND EVERYONE
BEGAN TO ACCELERATE.



I NOTICED AN 18-WHEELER
START SPUTTERING. SMOKE
BEGAN POURING OUT
FROM UNDER THE HOOD.



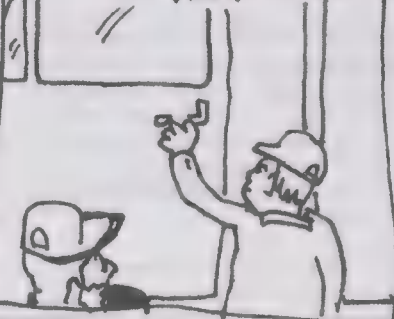
THE DRIVER FLIPPED ON
HIS HAZARD LIGHTS AND
PULLED OVER.



IMMEDIATELY, EVERY
OTHER TRUCKER IN SIGHT
PULLED OVER, THE DRIVERS
JUMPING OUT OF THEIR
CABS, RUSHING TO HELP
THEIR COMRADE.



TIME IS MONEY TO A
TRUCKER, AND THESE
GUYS HAD JUST LOST
HOURS IN A TRAFFIC
JAM.



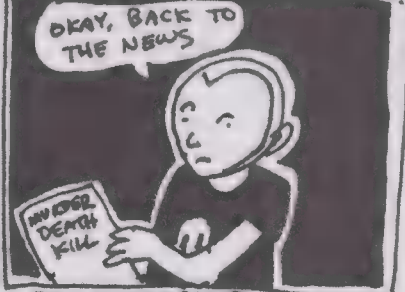
BUT NONE OF THAT
MATTERED WHEN ONE
OF THEIR OWN WAS
IN NEED.



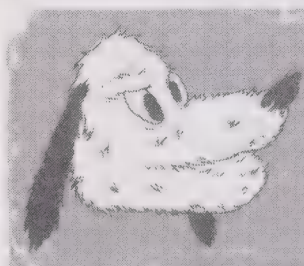
IT REALLY MOVED ME, AND
I BEGAN SOBBING RIGHT
THERE IN MY CAR.



IT'S NICE TO BE REMINDED
SOMETIMES THAT THE
WORLD ISN'T AS AWFUL
AS YOU MAY THINK IT IS.



BEN SNAKEPIT@GMAIL.COM



HERE COMES
SUCCESS!

CASSIE J SNEIDER

My friends are
my family.
My dog is
my family...

Hustlin'

"Your job," the doctor said, unfolding a pristine white lab coat, "is to measure the sleeves, but above all, to make the customers *feel good*. These are high quality lab coats, and, as a member of the medical community, I cannot tell you how much more valued you feel when you ■■■ wearing a lab coat that *fits and fits properly*."

I wasn't ■■■ what I should wear to ■■■■■ lab coats at ■ medical convention. After waking up fifteen minutes late and blindly groping through my closet that morning, I had chosen moccasins and my only pair of work-appropriate pants, frayed lightly at the bottom and held up by a belt buckle displaying the Dwarves logo, ■ skull crossed by two penises, known to fans ■ the Skull and Cross-Boners. The doctor was eighty years old and wore thick, unbreakable pervert glasses, so I was sure that my fashion risk would pass unnoticed, unless he found a reason to look at my crotch and squint really hard. Stranger things had been known to happen, ■ by day two, I had switched to ■ buckle of ■ monkey's paw giving the shocker. It ■■■ the tamest belt buckle I owned.

I was one of four people who had been hired as temporary staff for the lab coat booth. Dave was tall and lanky with hair like a 1990 yearbook photo, only he ■■■ thirty-eight. He cracked ■ lot of corny jokes and easily slipped into the role of ■ lab coat professional, romancing all the nurse practitioners who stopped to look by complimenting them until they ■■■ hooked.

My, that purse is lovely.

Oh, you're not a day over twenty-five. Fifty-three? You're pulling my leg.

Delores is it? I'm Dave. Come try ■ a lab coat, though we may not have them petite enough for you.

It was kind of hilarious to watch him work. His lab coat billowed with the speed of his movement as he scurried from one end of the booth to the other. Dave had an innate confidence and had mastered the lesson I was trying to teach myself: that nothing matters, and ■ second wasted on feeling self-conscious was just that—a wasted second that could otherwise have been spent fully immersed in your ■■■■■ Right Now.

As a lab coat technician, I was shyer but more precise. I already knew how to measure people from years of lying my way into weird sewing projects. Back home, I had worked at a local television studio on a kid's fitness show where I ■■■ tasked

with making costumes for a human-sized frog, crab, and sea monkey. If I could make ■ disgruntled actor look like ■ tortoise, this was ■ piece of cake.

Our other two temporary coworkers were Fran and Denise. Fran was in her forties, ■ mom—skinny in a neurotic sort of way where you could imagine her chain smoking over a pile of bills and yelling at ■ noisy kid in another room to shut up. Denise was also rail-thin and tan like an old boot. She wore blue eyeliner on her inner lower lid, a makeup decision she had probably been making since the seventh grade when no one had bothered to correct or point her in the right direction. Denise said she was ■ bartender, and when I asked what her last call song was, she said, "Jumpin' Jack Flash," in ■ voice so deep and petrifying, it bordered on a Wes Craven character.

We didn't immediately get along, me and Denise and Fran, mostly because they just talked to each other about their kids and shit-talked the nurse practitioners' hair and shoes as they walked past our booth. I got along best with Doc, who seemed to trust me implicitly for no good reason. It had been this way with authority figures for as long as I could remember. In the first grade, my teacher would ask ■■■ to fish the Virginia Slims out of her desk and then have me watch the class while she went to the bathroom to smoke them out the window. Doc almost immediately began asking me philosophical questions.

"What do you want out of your life?" It was ■ lull during ■ lecture about phlebotomy and I had just gotten all of us lunch. Dave had disappeared and Denise had gone out to the parking lot for a smoke break.

I thought about it. "I don't know yet, but I'm kind of working on it."

Doc held ■ plastic fork and knife in each hand and slowly punctured his salad like ■ praying mantis. "But what about ■ family?"

I took ■ bite of my sandwich and nearly choked. "No way. Children turn you inside out until you're not even human anymore." I looked ■ Fran, who was across the hall at the booth for ■ blood bank, filling her purse with free keychains. "Do you have kids?"

"No, no." He ate a single leaf, slowly, laboriously, as though he had crawled up a tree to get to it and wanted to savor every fiber. "But my lab coat factory is a lot like ■ family. My employees have children, and their children have children. And before

that, my medical career was terribly time consuming. I suppose I just never found the time."

"Well, it's kind of like that with me. My friends are my family. My dog is my family. I don't need a whole lot aside from that."

"What do you do?" His mouth opened wide and closed slowly. Leaves and spittle. Prehistoric digestion. "Outside of odd jobs, I mean."

"I'm ■ writer, mostly, but I do all sorts of things. I sew. I'm trying to start a band with my friends. And I started making comics kind of recently. I'm working on one about my favorite band to give to them when they play ■ show in ■ few weeks."

The doctor chewed slowly, considering what I just said. "Keep ■ it. The answers will be revealed to you in time." He yawned. Then his eyes closed and he fell asleep in his chair. It was like when you put ■ quarter in an animatronic fortune telling machine and it gives you its momentary wisdom before freezing in place.

Dave, Denise, and Fran came back before the lecture let out and the convention center flooded with nurses again.

"Last ■■■ to get five orders buys the others coffee," Dave said, tying his belt.

I wrapped my sandwich back in wrinkled tinfoil. "You're on, dude."

There were a lot more to my temporary coworkers than met the eye. I found out Dave ■■■ a substitute teacher in ■ few elementary schools and he had ■ master's degree in finance—which he kept pronouncing *finance*—an affectation that would usually drive me insane, but for ■■■■■ reason it suited him perfectly. He also mentioned that he picked up work ■ ■ television extra whenever there was ■ shoot in town.

"Friday Night Lights films every Saturday. It doesn't pay, but they do feed you," he said, running a credit card for ■ nurse from Dallas who had special-ordered a hot pink lab coat. "You've gotta meet the other extras. They would love you."

By the second day, Fran and Denise opened up a little more. Fran ■■■ a secret shopper when her kids were at school. Denise did catering for socials and fancy parties. "It's like a network," Denise said, fingering the cigarettes in her lab coat pocket, voice a little husky. "Once you're in, you're in. Plus, they feed you."

Fran made all of us go from booth to booth collecting free samples of surgical supplies



STEVE THUESON

... I don't need a whole lot aside from that.

and pens with the names of pharmaceutical companies imprinted on them.

"What are you going to do with these?" I asked, handing her a package of disposable catheters.

"I give 'em out on Halloween. Kids don't care. They just like free stuff."

In a lull between rushes, Dave explained to me how easy it was to get a job as a substitute teacher. He also said he could help me with *fin-nance*, if I ever needed to know how to invest. Doc watched us, slowly eating another salad before falling asleep in a folding chair. At some point during the last ten-hour day of measuring sleeves and grabbing handfuls of Pfizer golf pencils for Fran, I became aware of a new

feeling. Before this medical convention, I was alone, scrounging Craigslist while my roommate was at his nine-to-five job, hoping to find a temporary job that didn't sound soul-crushing to buy next week's coffee and dog food and eventually next month's rent. But now, I was keenly aware that I wasn't alone. I was part of a powerful Voltron of people who had discovered the secret that you didn't need to work every day to survive, that you could meet new people every day and build a life made from free sandwiches, finance tips from other weirdos, and promotional pens for dick creams.

When it was over, we disassembled the booth. Dave and Fran folded the trade show

curtains while I packed away the lab coats and order forms. We talked about the best free meal we ever got at a job, and Denise was because she got crab legs at a boat show. We made vague plans to karaoke on some lucky week when Denise wasn't working and Fran could afford a babysitter before finally parting ways.

I was the last one out, wheeling a dolly of lab coats to Doc's rental car.

"You meet such nice people at these conventions," he said, shaking my hand. "Plus, they feed you, you know."

—Cassie J. Snider

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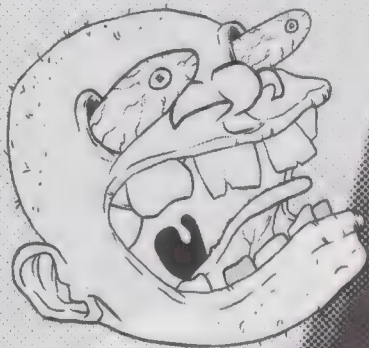
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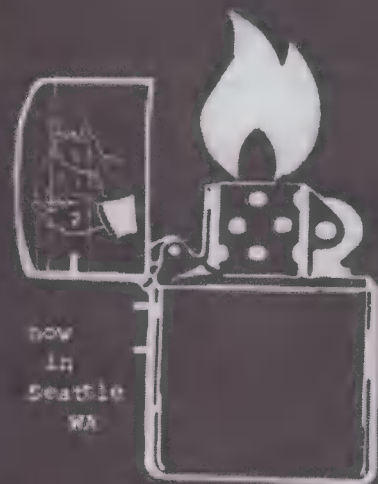


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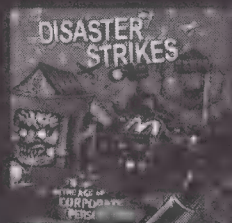
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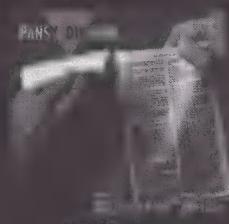
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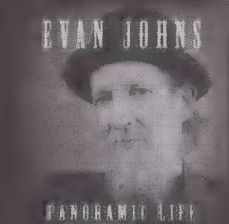
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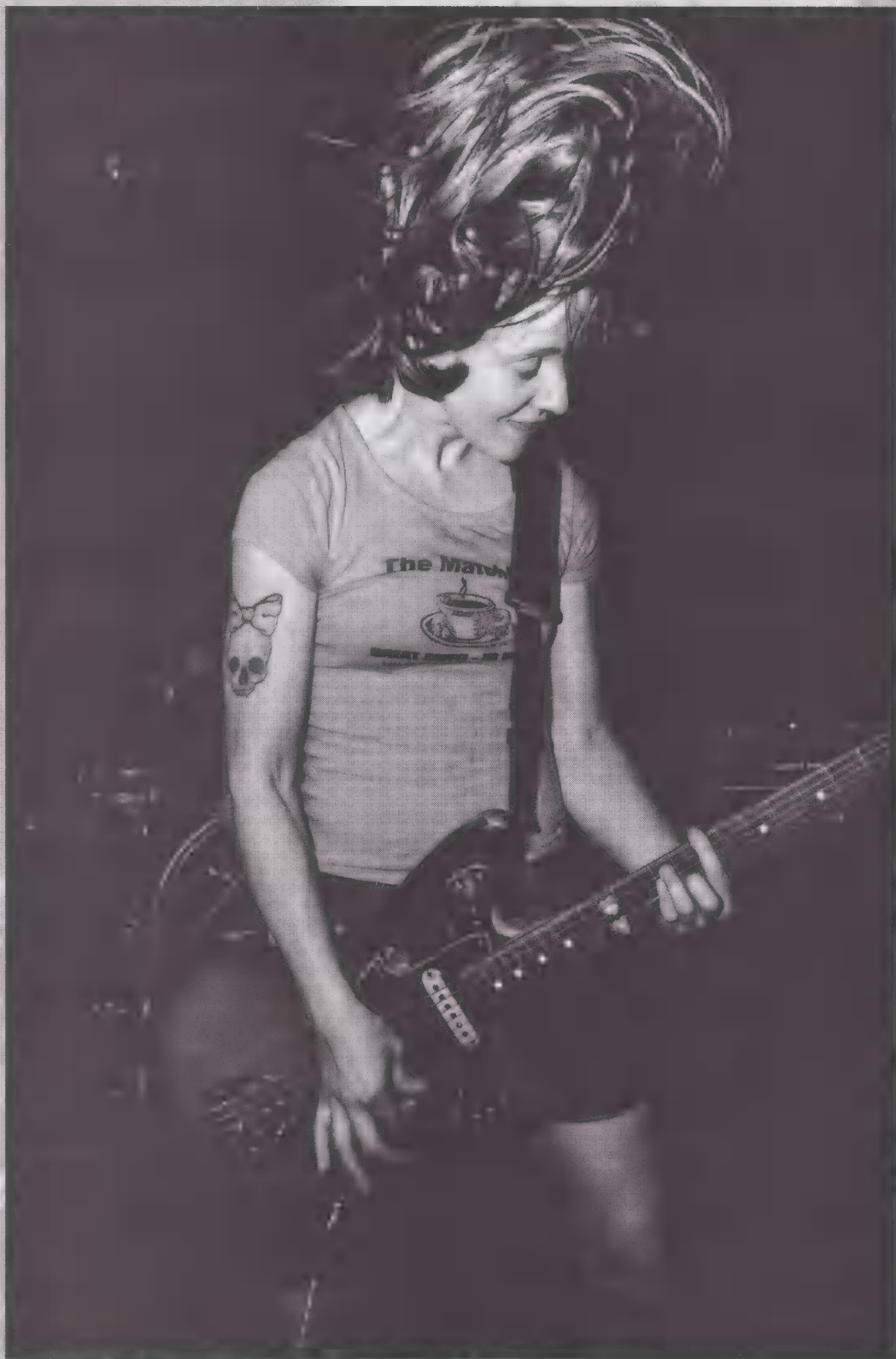
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AMERICAN GRILLED CHEESE REVIEW REV. NORB

The Monkees
are about
CONFLICT.

THE SONG THE GUY FROM WEEZER WROTE FOR THE NEW MONKEES ALBUM SUCKS AND HERE'S WHY

...but first, it would be reasonable and prudent to discuss exactly why the Monkees should be discussed at all within the pages of *Razorcake*. I mean, "independent punk rock" and all like that doesn't really mesh all that meshingly with "actors playing a band on TV whose records were in large part written by professional songwriters and recorded by session musicians," ya know? I make no bones about it; I love the Monkees, and I have since I was a child and cut their flexi-discs off the backs of Post® Rice Krinkles™ boxes. If I am REALLY, REALLY FLIPPING OUT ABOUT SOMETHING, I put on the Monkees, and I usually chill the fuck out. Which is, of course, the opposite vector punk rock is supposed to take the listener. Usually our aim is to get chilled-out people to flip the fuck out about shit. So, I acknowledge that the Monkees have essentially no connection to punk rock whatsoever (although Paul Weller of The Jam did co-write a song for their new album, and they did do a Wreckless Eric cover on that album they put out in the '80s) (and, now that I think about it, the first punk band I ever saw covered "Let's Dance On" at the first punk show I ever attended, so why don't you just fuck right off and let me continue my story?). But, I mean, cripes, the Sex Pistols covered "Stepping Stone" (actually originally recorded by Paul Revere & The Raiders about three months earlier than the Monkees version, you can write that down) and the Dickies covered "She," so why the fuck we even having this discussion? Just let me like the Monkees in peace! I mean, the Monkees are totally influential in my little sub-generational hunk as the early archetype of what a "band," such as it was, should be: A bunch of guys with no money hanging out and goofing off together. Compare and contrast this with people a little older than me who grew up thinking that if you were a band, throngs of teenage girls would be chasing you down the streets of London (note clever Anti-Nowhere League reference to keep this column punk), that that was just how it worked, or people a little younger than me, who grew up thinking arena rock bullshit was the norm (or, compare them to the Partridge Family, who taught me all that being a professional musician was really fucking boring and it would be funner

to shoplift). When I was about fourteen or fifteen (which was about 1980, I'm afraid), you could buy used Monkees (and Paul Revere & The Raiders) albums for a quarter or fifty cents at pretty much any record store with a used section. They were considered utterly valueless; the records at the bottom of the box when someone sold their record collection. These bands and records were so beloved that, when their owners grew up and started listening to Grand Funk Railroad or Three Dog Night or whatever the fuck, they became be-hated. To me, there is a certain component of punk rock that involves finding worth in valueless garbage; thus, while the Monkees and their million-selling records are demonstrably un-punk, somehow, buying cheap, beat up Monkees records is not un-punk. There. "Not un-punk." I'm glad we got that settled. And elegantly! So anyway, the Monkees put out a new record, which you are under no obligation to own nor acknowledge, and a bunch of people wrote songs for it, including the dude from the Jam, the dude from XTC, and the dude from Weezer. Now, not to put too fine of a point on it, but fuck Weezer. They were never any good. Were they? Whatever, the sins of the past are washed away in the perfect Monkees light; Weezer's failings of a quarter-century past are immaterial. However, the song that Weezer dude wrote for the new Monkees album—"She Makes Me Laugh" (incidentally the first single from the album, if they even have singles any more)—is BULLSHIT. Here's why: It's just some syrupy bubblegum thing. That's why. His girlfriend sends him funny pictures on his cell phone. *She makes him laugh! Well, isn't that precious?* It is a carefree, breezy pop number. HERE'S WHAT PISSES ME OFF: BELIEVE IT OR DON'T, THE MONKEES ARE NOT ABOUT CAREFREE, BREEZY POP NUMBERS. The Monkees are about CONFLICT, and the resolution of same. How does their theme song start? "Here we come, walkin' down the street, we get the funniest looks from everyone we meet." FUNNY LOOKS FROM EVERYONE YOU MEET is CONFLICT! It's not "here we come, walkin' down the street, we get a firm handshake and a warm smile and freshly baked cookies from everyone we meet," is

it??? What about "Last Train to Clarksville"? He don't know if he's ever coming home! *Conflict!* Take "I'm a Believer," love will out to get him! Disappointment haunted all his dreams! When he needed sunshine he got rain! *Conflict!* "A Little Bit Me, A Little Bit You"? *Conflict and the assigning of blame!* "Look Out (Here Comes Tomorrow)"? Davy must choose between Sondra and Mary! That's *conflict*, but I suggest thinking outside of the box on that one! In "Pleasant Valley Sunday," the *absence* of conflict is actually portrayed as masking deeper issues. *The conflict is widespread and multi-layered!* Even in "Daydream Believer," Davy doesn't have \$1.01 to spend (or something like that), plus he doesn't want to shave! *Conflict!* ALMOST ALL GREAT MONKEES SONGS REVOLVE AROUND THE RESOLUTION OF CONFLICT. Now, you may counter with the aforementioned "Let's Dance On." *Where's the conflict in that, one might ask?* Well, the conflict in "Let's Dance On" is implicit and external to the song: The enemy here is NOT Dancing On. *The song is a frantic battle between the forces of Dancing On and Not Dancing On, locked in perpetual mortal combat!* Cats and dogs living together! Human sacrifice! Mass hysteria! In "Saturday's Child," Micky sings about how everyone born on Sunday through Friday is a fucked-up asshole. *Conflict!* "I Wanna Be Free," Davy's first soppy ballad? Dude wants to be free! That means the dude is currently NOT free. Un-freedom means *conflict!* "Tomorrow's Gonna Be Another Day"? That whole song is about how today sucks! *Conflict!* "This Just Doesn't Seem To Be My Day"? *More conflict!* However, you gotta wonder how "Tomorrow's Gonna Be Another Day" wound up preceding "This Just Doesn't Seem To Be My Day" on the album, kinda like why is "Now I've Got a Witness" on the first side of that Rolling Stones album and "Can I Get a Witness" on the second side (I fret about such matters). How about "Gonna Buy Me a Dog"? That's like the most conflict song ever! *We know his girl just called him up! She woke him from his sleep! We should have heard the things she said! We know she hurt his feelings deep! Or, what about "Your Auntie Grizelda"? We know she's having a fit! She doesn't like him a bit!*



ALEX BARRETT

I WANT FUCKING RUPTURED PIG INTESTINES and YOU GIVE ME SELFIES AT THE MALL!!!

No bird of grace ever lit on Auntie Grizelda! There is a ton of conflict in "Mary, Mary," not the least of which revolves around Run-DMC covering it twenty years later (and, at that point in time, not only is there mere garden variety conflict, but "buggin'" as well, which is probably some new type of conflict the kids all dig). Mr. Webster steals all the bank's money, the Salesman has got a short lifespan and has to walk a hundred and ten miles, the brother best get down there on the double before his sister gets her pretty little self in trouble, the Star Collector only aims to please young celebrities, the Loudmouth Yankee Who Went Down To Mexico lightly took advantage of a girl who loved him so and realizes that chances ~~are~~ but once and boy he sure missed his, the businessman has traded his travelogue of maybe-next-year places for his ~~own~~ upon the door and pays for it with years he cannot buy back with his tears when he finds out there's been no one keeping score, the choo choo train was left out in the rain the day after Santa came, Zor and Zam had a fucking war and nobody showed up, the Randy Scouse Git wonders why don't people be like he, why don't they stop and see, why don't they hate who he hates, kill who he kills to be

free, and Peter Percival Patterson's Pet Pig Porky ate a much pie that he fucking POPPED. *Fucking ruptured pig intestines!!! I WANT FUCKING RUPTURED PIG INTESTINES and YOU GIVE ME SELFIES AT THE MALL!!! FUCK OFF, DUDE, YOU TOTALLY DO NOT GET IT!!!* And how, pray tell, does one not "get" the Monkees? In the immortal words of Sam Kinison, "THEY'RE NOT EVEN A REAL BAND, YOU FUCK!!!" The Monkees are NOT about syrupy, conflict-free, my-girlfriend-sends-me-selfies-she-takes-at-the-mall pop! YOU ARE CONFUSING THEM WITH THE ARCHIES, YOU TWIT! The only conflict with the Archies was that for the first thirty seconds of their theme song, they couldn't find Jughead, and it wasn't the Archies without the Jughead Beat. Then Jughead showed up, and Everything's Archie. I mean, sure, the Archies had to contend with trying to untangle the jingle from the jangle (and I'll give you "Truck Driver," which is pretty conflict-y as Archies songs go), but they didn't have exploding pigs and rain instead of sunshine and things of this nature (some bands have a coke problem. The Monkees had a Coke™ problem, in that they dumped one over music producer Don Kirshner's

head. This refreshing shampoo was enough to send Kirshner fleeing from the show to start the Archies, who, as cartoon characters, were a little easier on the scalp). So, yes. That is the spleen that I needed to vent: The Weezer dude sucks because he wrote an Archies song for the Monkees. The fact that ~~he~~ would be in a position to be asked to write a song for the Monkees—the single, yet!—and would be wholly unable to grasp that enduring central concept that sets that band apart from the Archies or the Ohio Express or Josie & The fucking Pussycats is just... just... just ENRAGING BEYOND BELIEF!!! I'M MAD AS HELL!!! I WANT MY COUNTRY BACK!!! I'M FLIPPING OUT!!! MY BLOOD PRESSURE IS SHOOTING THROUGH THE ROOF!!! CALM YOURSELF, YOU'LL SPURT!!! QUICK, WHERE ARE MY MONKEES RECORDS? I NEED TO CALM DOWN!!! WAIT, NOT THE WEEZER SONG!!! AAAAAAAAAAAAAA AAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAA!!! Please excuse me. I think I'm going to join Peter Percival Patterson's Pet Pig Porky now.

Love
—Norb





Wise-ass
shit-talking
runs deep in my
familia's DNA.

Fuck You, Dale

It goes without saying that a lot of us often feel strongly about a band we love or, in some cases, a band we absolutely fucking hate. Funny thing is, if your friends happen to be into a band that you couldn't give two shits about (or vice versa), it really shouldn't matter, 'cause your friends are your friends and the mutual respect is always gonna be there, right? It best be, if they're truly your friends.

Mutual respect withstanding, this doesn't mean you don't get to fuck with one another, long as you don't get into a fistfight, y'know? Wise-ass shit-talking runs deep in my familia's DNA, so sue me—I like to

with that guy relentlessly jumping up Ty's ass about it. This person reminded me of the fuckfaces back in high school who self-segregated themselves from others simply because of the music they listened to.

I never understood this mentality, and I still don't. I got along with pretty much all the different types in high school: gnarly metal heads, crazy-insane punk rockers, and even a good chunk of the new wave contingent (this was the '80s). I even got along with a majority of the cholos and cholas, sharing a mutual love and respect for oldies, even though a lot of 'em called me "Rocker."

Music was a common denominator. Most

into heated debates with Todd, trying to get him onboard with Aerosmith. Todd wasn't having it one bit. He would fuck with Chris for a few minutes, over-exaggerating the way singer Steven Tyler sung, always interrupting the song with a rousing "*SHUT THE FUCK UP!*" The best part of all this is that Todd was completely cool about it after he had his few minutes of torturing Chris, and we went on with our day.

After starting to regularly play in bands, another peculiar thing I came to realize was if any of your friends were in a band, the supposed thing to do was to automatically be a fan of each other's

And let's make one fact clear: there's a significant difference between spirited ripping amongst friends and being a dick.

laugh. Any one of my family members and pals out there reading knows this to be true, no matter what we're discussing. Don't get me wrong, there's not a constant barrage of ripping and bagging spilling forth outta my mouth, but if someone leaves the door wide open for comment, I'm gonna get at least my two cents worth in. Remember: no laughter, no life.

If the internet isn't weird enough, the whole Facebook trip is taken way too seriously by some people. More often than not, I'm usually doing one of two things on there: 1) Music-related posts/exchanges. 2) Drumming up shenanigans whenever possible. The relentless goofing is almost always with pals whom I don't have the opportunity to see regularly, usually because of the distance from each other, but places like FB make it much easier to remedy that situation with a few taps of the smart phone.

A perfect example of this FB über-seriousness was a recent discussion started up by my homie and fellow Razorcaker Ty Stranglehold on FB about his severe disdain for Aerosmith. After watching the shitstorm bearing down on the conversation with a few people not knowing how to let Ty's Aerosmith hatred go, it got a bit unsettling

friends poked fun or sweated each other for their particular music tastes, but—even back then—there were the handful of buttholes who saw fit to be more than just dicky about some of their friends' music preferences. And let's make one fact nice and sparkling clear: there's a significant difference between spirited ripping amongst friends and being a dick. The difference is that no one likes a dick. Unfortunately, some of those teenage dicks never grew up in that sense, making it hard for the few friends they had to tolerate being around 'em.

The whole FB thing made me remember just how much one of my oldest childhood friends, Todd (RIP, *Razorcake* issue #16), couldn't fucking stand Aerosmith. I asked him after we got a bit older why he wasn't having it with that band, especially since we both dug a lot of '70s rock outfits. His reply got me laughing every time, without fail, literally busting me up to this day: [singing] "*Ja-nie's got a g—SHUT THE FUCK UP! Bunch of hacks, with their shitty, boring-ass songs that no one cares about!*" I personally take it or leave it with a handful of Aerosmith tunes. They never reeled me in a full album kind of band, just kinda "meh." It would bum out our mutual friend Chris—who got

bands. No, it doesn't work that way. Not with me, anyway. No, that's not being a dick—because I'll support the fuck out of a friend's band—but that doesn't necessarily mean I'm a fan. Again, I never understood this mentality. If I was in a band—and something wasn't jiving with it—I'd expect my friends to tell me and not blow smoke up my ass, trying to tell me what I might want to hear. To hell with that, because I know they'd want to hear the truth from me. Again, if your friends are your friends, they should be more than able to deal with this. If they can't, maybe being in a band isn't for them. On the same token, your friends whose bands you go absolute apeshit over? Ribbing them for ribbing's sake is a given, 'cause that's what friends do (or should do, anyway).

I recall my old pal Ken All Night Rocker handling his opinions a bit differently, handing out rations of shit to mutual friends' bands on occasion, rolling his wheelchair up against the stage and mock-yawning wildly with his hand while looking at his other hand closely, as if he was wearing a wristwatch. Bands that noticed him doing this would walk over after their set and ask Ken why he would do something like that. "Because



DANNY RUST

your band sucky-suck-sucks!" Ken would snap back, with his trademark menacing grin, "Dude, we're bros, but I ain't down with your band!" Then he would continue to sit and drink with 'em. Funny thing is that he'd sweat the bands he loved just as hard—if not even worse—usually ending with copious amounts of cocktails.

The bottom line here is that no matter how bad some of your friends' musical preferences might be or how unlistenable ~~some~~ of their bands may sound, that's part of the deal—it's about taking the good with the bad, warts and all. Besides, the good things you share with friends far outweigh all the other horseshittery that may occur. And the good things ■■ the

most important during the time we share with each other, so don't take that shit for granted. Life is too short and too rad.

Just remember, it could be worse.
You *could* be ■ filthy Deadhead.

I'm Against It
—Designated Dale

HORSEBROWNS

by Holly Wood



@hollyhorsebrowns



Dan Monick's Photo Page
Egrets On Ergot, Circus of Books, 3/11/2016



Rachel Framingheddu's Photo Page

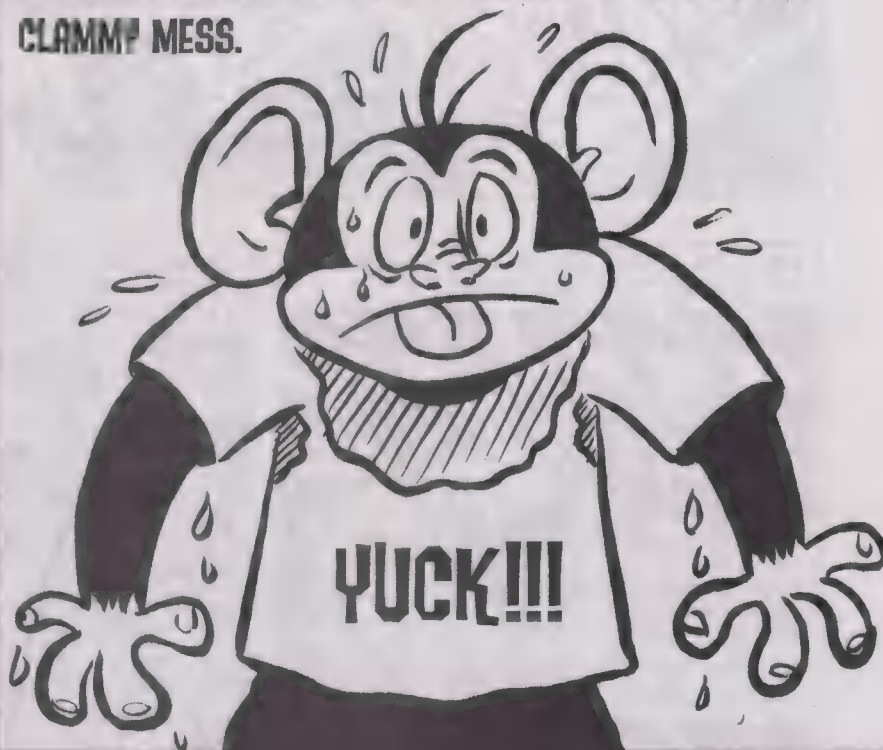
Special FX artist David Bradley as Dabrockels

CHICO SIMIO #57

"4 NOTES
FROM A COMIC
CON VET"

BY ART F.

#1 - NO MATTER HOW COLD IT IS INSIDE THE CONVENTION CENTER, I SPEND THE WHOLE WEEKEND AS A SWEATY, CLAMMY MESS.



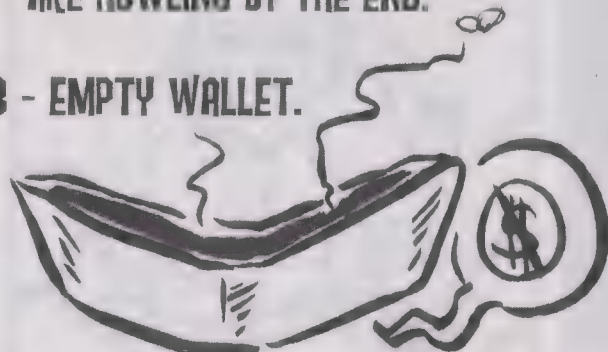
#4 - IT'S ALL WORTH IT! ALL OF THE SWEAT, PAIN, AND OTHER VARIOUS ANNOYANCES, DOESN'T DETER ME FROM HAVING A GREAT TIME!



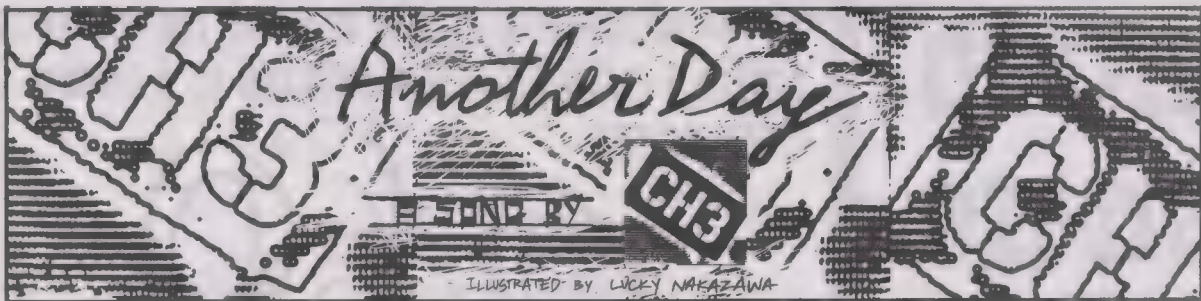
#2 - ACHY, ACHY FEET. THESE DOGS ARE HOWLING BY THE END.



#3 - EMPTY WALLET.



SEEING OLD FRIENDS AND MAKING NEW FRIENDS MAKE UP FOR ANY HASSLES AND JUST BEING THERE RECHARGES MY ARTISTIC BATTERIES AND INSPIRES ME!

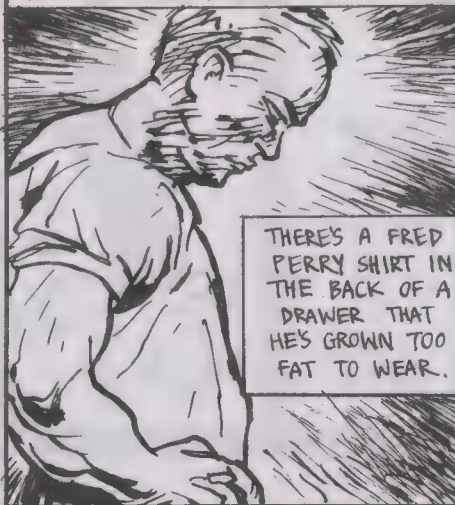


SHE PRAYS TONIGHT SHE MIGHT FIND THE ONE
TO FINALLY TASTE HER TEARS.



SHE'S GOT A
COCKSPARRER TAT
ON THE BACK OF
HER NECK THAT
NO ONE'S TOUCHED
IN SEVEN YEARS.

HE WASHES HIS CAR AND THEN
WASHES HIS SHEETS AND WHAT'S
LEFT OF HIS HAIR.



THERE'S A FRED
PERRY SHIRT IN
THE BACK OF A
DRAWER THAT
HE'S GROWN TOO
FAT TO WEAR.



IS THERE NOTHING FOR ME?

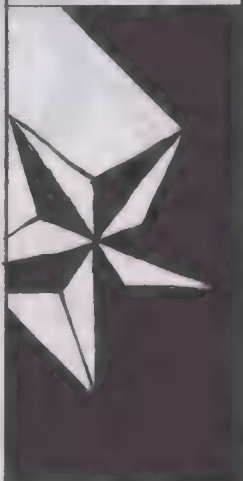


THEY SCREAM INTO THE NIGHT...

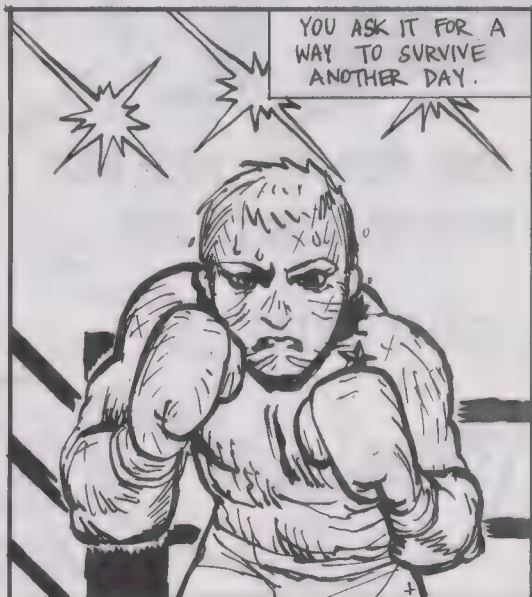
YOU SEE THE STARS COME UN-
DONE, COUNT THEM FALLING
ONE BY ONE. YOU WISH UNTIL
YOU PRAY, YOU SURVIVED ANOTHER
DAY.



YOU SEE THE MOON
HAUNT THE NIGHT,
BLEEDING MOONBEAMS
ACROSS THE SKY.

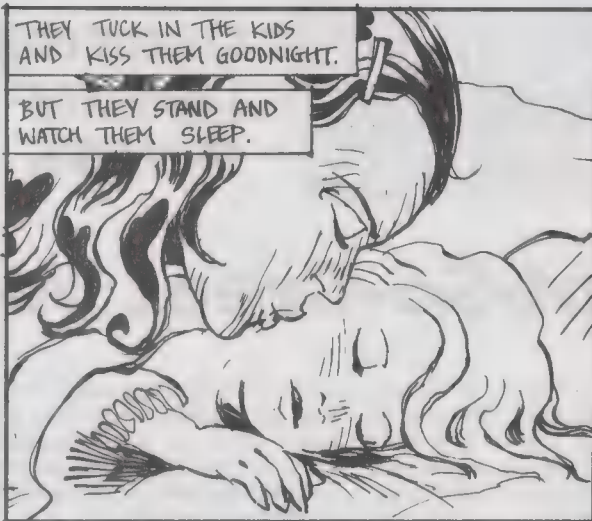


YOU ASK IT FOR A
WAY TO SURVIVE
ANOTHER DAY.

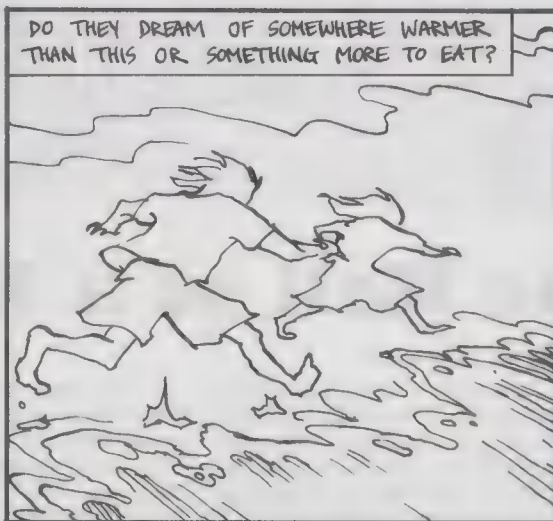


THEY TUCK IN THE KIDS
AND KISS THEM GOODNIGHT.

BUT THEY STAND AND
WATCH THEM SLEEP.

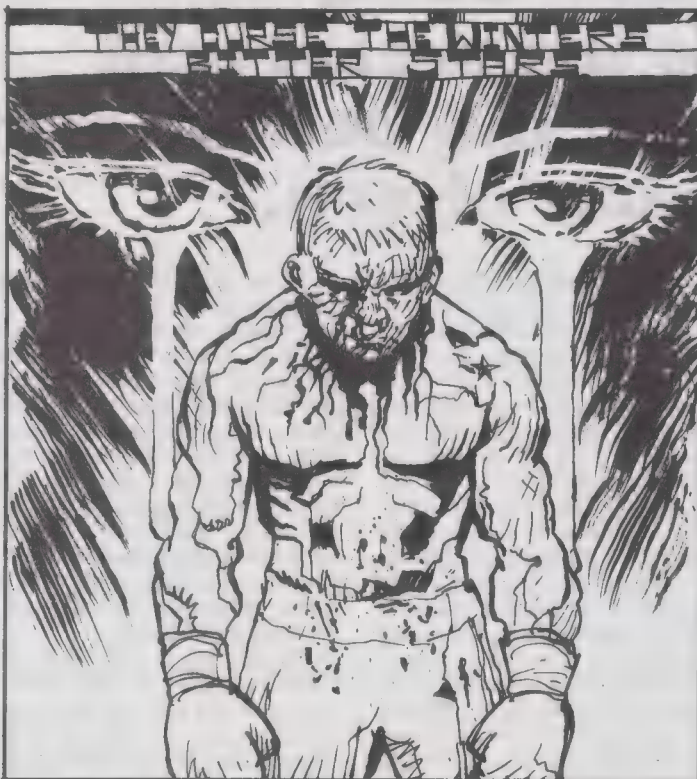


DO THEY DREAM OF SOMEWHERE WARMER
THAN THIS OR SOMETHING MORE TO EAT?



IT WAS SUMMER ONCE,
AND THEY WATCHED
THEM RUN

BAREFOOT IN THE SAND.

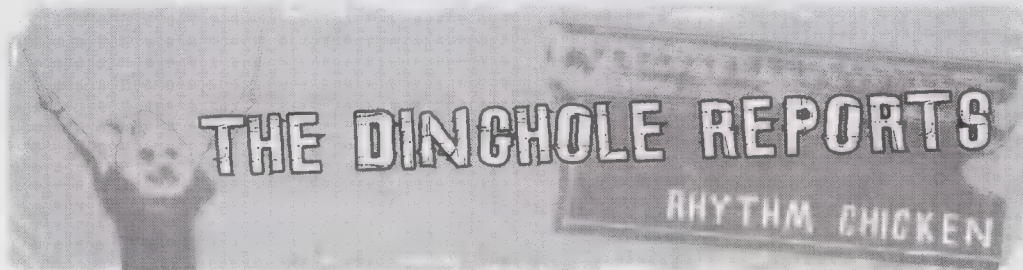


AND THE BOSSES THEY ONCE HAD.



ANOTHER DAY. ANOTHER DAY.





**Nobody clapped.
There was
no encore.**

One Hell of a Not-So-Great Year

I've had one hell of a not-so-great year so far. I had to close my business multiple times because of my back problems. I underwent major back surgery. I had to skip my annual winter vacation. I had to spend five months lying around not doing anything because I couldn't. I had to watch my meager savings dwindle away that whole time. Then about ten weeks after my surgery, I felt ready to re-open my soup shop and a local girl ran through a stop sign and totaled my car, effectively tossing me around in my crappy Honda like a rag doll. Her Volvo SUV barely got a scratch.

I almost want to ask, "What's next, god?" but the way this year has gone, I really don't want to know.

Somehow, the impact of having my car totaled didn't have much lasting negative effects on my physical condition. Just two days later, I was in the sauna at the YMCA

Now, three weeks after the crash, my back seems to be doing fine. My shop is re-opened and business is good. I've even replaced my car and couldn't be happier with the replacement. I've given considerable thought *why* that funny image came into my head at such a terrifying moment. I can only assume that in a near life-or-death scenario, my chicken brain tried to calm me. It wasn't my whole life that flashed before my eyes, just a comical image of my friend in a gorilla suit sliding down a snow hill while an entire city went apeshit around him. This brings us to today's story.

"The Single Funnest Night of my Life" is accurate enough. I cannot fathom any future night of mine stealing that title. It was a night that could only come once, was enjoyed to the fullest, and then remembered forever. My twenty-six years on this earth had precariously led me to that particular

coach of a bumbling team. Present Green Bay and legendary Green Bay didn't quite match up. To my childhood mind, the lore of Green Bay's glory days seemed like the story of Adam and Eve, or Noah's Ark. It was almost based on faith.

This legendary and forever victorious team is, of course, the Green Bay Packers. (I think I just heard Ben Snakepit flip the page to the next column.) I've always been hesitant to write *anything* about the funnest night of my life for fear of never being able to accurately convey the sheer human joy collectively felt by an entire city. I've always known the great challenge of putting Packer glory into words, phrases, and ideas which can accurately make sense to those punkers out there who are not citizens of Packerland. There it is: the great task of convincing Packer Greatness to sneering punk rockers who don't live in Wisconsin.

Once in the front door, I opened the umbrella and shoved it into the ceiling fan for maximum chaos.

telling my crash story to a few other locals. One guy spoke up and asked, "Is your drumset okay?" You see, my drumset is *always* in the back of my car because I really have no other space to store it. I chuckled because, like me, the drumset somehow also came through unscathed. Thanks for the concern.

In that very moment when her front end smashed into my little Honda, I had an interesting experience. The whole event calmly progressed in slow motion and without panic, like I had already accepted the crash was eminent and I was planning the remainder of my evening. Then the impact shot a new image into my mind of me in an ambulance going back to the hospital to have the screws and rods reset in my spine. That scary image was soon oddly replaced with the image of my old friend Jason Pecard sliding down a huge pile of snow. I walked around with wobbly legs waiting for the cop to show up.

evening. I honestly thought this evening was the closest thing to being impossible without technically being impossible. This is a story about glory, heritage, and the collective hopes and dreams of an entire drunken city.

Aside from a kickass music scene that fluctuated in waves of intensity, Green Bay didn't have much going on. A grey and smoky mill town of pickup trucks and coal hills, Green Bay's skyline is an odd mix of church spires and one NFL stadium. Growing up in Green Bay, I'd always heard that our team used to really be something, *world champions*, in fact. I was raised on stories of how our football team dominated the sport like no other team had done before or since. This was always reassuring to hear about, but the team I remember seeing in the '70s and '80s gave me no reason to believe those glory days would ever return. I'd heard about how Bart Starr was the greatest quarterback of all time. The Bart Starr I saw was a bumbling

When traveling punk rockers arrive in Milwaukee or Green Bay, they are soon perplexed by our rabid support for the green and gold. I would guess that ninety-eight percent of Wisconsin-born punk rockers feel this support requires no explaining, that Packer Greatness just *is*. Out-of-towners often scoff at our Packer-backing, equating it to a high school pep rally or a type of ignorant small town patriotism. Some might say that our Packer worship puts us in the same boat as those bonehead jocks who beat us up in junior high. I can almost understand such a perspective... for any other team but the Green Bay Packers!

On that holiest of Super Bowl Sundays, I rolled into town at 5 AM after an out-of-town rock and roll gig. My bandmate Paul instantly made me a Bloody Mary and we enjoyed them before sunrise. I went home and started creating my Pabst-O-Vision theater (three medium-sized color TVs all in



DEAD BROKE REKERDS



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DEEP POCKETS- "New Life" 7" EP

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DAN PADILLA / PRINCE- Split 7" EP

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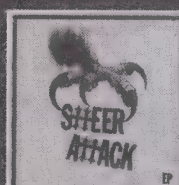
houseofvlad.tumblr.com // @HouseofVlad // 666



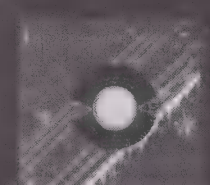
The Pine Hill Haints
Blue Halloween 7'



Slow Motion Cowboys
'In Early/On the
Mesa'



SHEER ATTACK- Self Third
EP



Calvin Johnson and
the Snow-Tones 7'



Martie Flood
'MAXX' LP

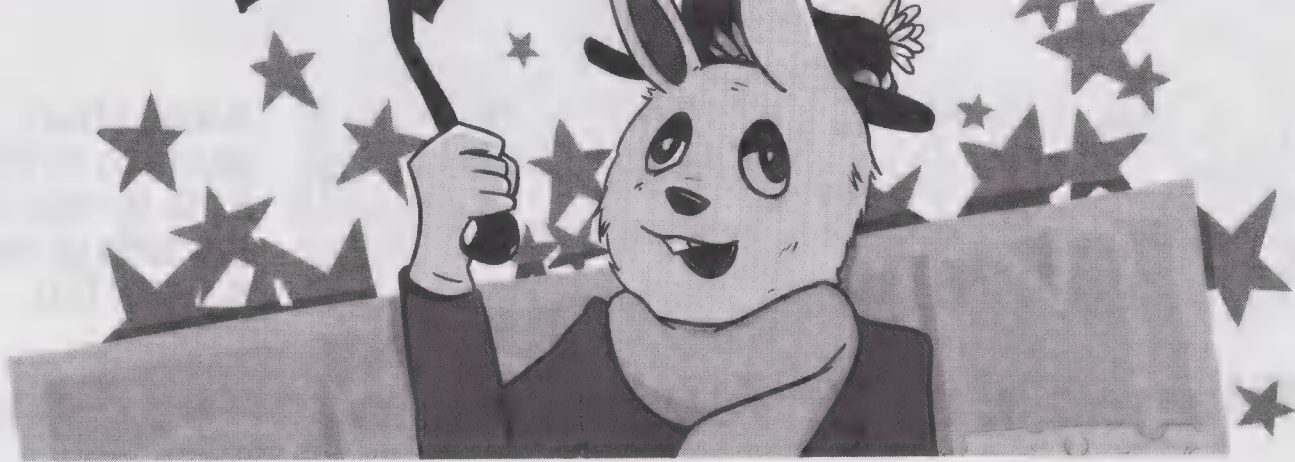


The Invisible Teardrops- "Cry, Cry, Cry"



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You could just about see the building pulsating with punk rock celebration!

my living room completely surrounded by various Pabst artifacts and antiques). Slowly throughout the afternoon, friends began showing up from near and far. The build up and tension of this game was felt by a nation of rabid Packer fans, waiting twenty-nine years for this very game!

Of course, the Packers won, humiliating the New England Patriots 35 to 21.

Just like that, my lifetime of waiting was over. My entire twenty-six years of watching the Packers lose, lose, and lose again, was over. *The Green Bay Packers had just won the Super Bowl.* That seemed so absolutely surreal. That seemed so completely out of a fairy tale. If ever there was a quintessential underdog story, this was it. Here we are, almost twenty years later, and it doesn't seem all too outlandish at all, but in 1997 it felt like an almost certain impossibility. Even now, I feel as if my life has two distinct eras: before and after Super Bowl XXXI. As for during Super Bowl XXXI? Well, at one point during the game, Razorcake record reviewer Lord Kveldulfr stepped outside my home to smoke a cigarette in the lightly falling snow. He heard one of my neighbors open his door and yell out into the quiet, snow-blanketed street one single word: "HAPPINESS!"

It was a Sunday night. Green Bay got about six inches of fresh snow that evening, a good, comfortable padding for the madcap drunken frivolity about to ensue. During the game the streets were absolutely dead, total ghost town. Once the game finished, an entire city erupted in what can only be described as immense joy. Punkers and rednecks arm in arm! Metalheads and jocks hugging! Republicans and democrats! Carnivores and vegans! Cops and criminals! For one glorious night, every single person in this entire city experienced complete and total happiness, together, and all for the same reason! We'd waited pretty damn long, and the wait was over! The Green Bay Packers had just won the Super Bowl, and it happened during my lifetime!

The fuse was lit.

My tribe of Pabst-gulping Packer punkers made our way downtown to the Speakeasy on Main Street (Green Bay's punk rock bar). The streets were completely alive with crazed, jubilant fans, honking and yelling with the windows rolled down in the blizzard! Church bells rang for hours! A positive insanity had swelled city-wide! From outside the Speakeasy you could just about see the building pulsating with punk rock celebration! Main Street was filled with wandering, celebrating cheeseheads, screaming, dancing, throwing snowballs, making snow angels in the road, wrestling, singing, and going completely wild on the one night a Green Bay person is totally allowed to lose their mind! This was it! The biggest party of our lives!

I stormed into the bar with my Pabst umbrella. Once in the front door, I opened the umbrella and shoved it into the ceiling fan for maximum chaos before getting sucked into the whirling pandemonium of a full Speakeasy going absolutely insane. The head bartender grabbed me and said I was instantly cut off. He would not sell me any drinks. People fed me their drinks all night. Amid the swirling chaos that was Speakeasy's wildest night, there stood Rev. Nørb wearing a cheesehead while calmly playing pinball. I grabbed my cousin Dan and yelled into his ear, "Let's march north up Main Street!" (Main Street runs east and west.) Dan, of course, thought I said to march Nørb up Main Street. Confusion reigned as he tried to hoist Nørb up on our shoulders.

I stepped outside to see what the rest of Green Bay was doing. Severe celebration continued out in the blizzard. It was as if a million smiling inmates were released from the local loony bin. I saw a pickup truck slowly trudging down the street with about ten screaming people riding in the back. I did a Lambeau Leap into the passing truck! They hollered for a while before pushing me out. I ran into the gay bar down the street and danced with my wrecked Pabst umbrella for another while.

Then back out on the street I noticed a large snow hill in the corner of the parking lot

across the street. Happy screaming Packer fans were playing a drunken game of King of the Hill! Then I saw it. Jason Pecard in a gorilla suit stood alone at the top, arms victoriously swinging skyward as he jumped and slid down the enormous pile of snow without a care in the world. It was the most carefree expression of pure joy I think I have ever seen.

I woke up the next morning on the floor of the Pabst-O-Vision theater with most of my crumpled Pabst umbrella shoved down my pants.

So, let's go back to my recent car crash. At the point of impact, while my body was tossed around my crumpled Honda and I was pretty sure I'd end up back in the hospital, I had that image of Jason in his gorilla suit pass through my mind. Was it a higher being's way of letting me know things were gonna be okay? Was it a reminder to live life to the fullest and have fun all along the way? Was it a bizarre subconscious corner of my mind that may get off on strange sexual behavior with large animal costumes? (Now that's just silly.) I'm not sure what it means, but I will tell you this, the Packers are going all the way this year.

**Avant Garde Dinghole
Report #1: Random
Unintentional Kicks!
(Rhythm Chicken sighting
#square root of negative one!)**

The girl ran through the stop sign and swerved into my lane just before we collided head-on. The impact spun my car sideways before the weight and power of her SUV pushed my car sideways another five feet. During that time, my drums in the back were jostled around and created a few random percussive sounds. It was my John Cage cover set. Nobody clapped. There was no encore. I wasn't even wearing the chicken head, but it was there getting tossed around with the drums. During my six- to twelve-month surgery recovery period, this is the kind of ruckus I must rely on.

GO PACK GO.

-Rhythm Chicken



PUNK PARENTHOOD FOR THE SLEEP DEPRIVED

JENNIFER WHITEFORD

**Social effort
needs to be put
forth to reap the
rewards of being
a music fan.**

Planet Earth Nineteen-Ninety-Four

When I was in the tenth grade, a girl I hardly knew handed me a CD copy of Sonic Youth's *Goo* while we loitered by our lockers one morning. "Here," she said, shoving the cracked plastic case at me, "you should borrow this."

Until that day, I'd been listening to a mix of music my parents liked (Motown and The Beatles), radio-friendly heavy metal, and the occasional random local Toronto band who managed to make it onto the radio thanks to laws in Canada that require the promotion of Canadian content. *Goo* marked a turning point for me. It showed me there was music out there that was more interesting and exciting than what I'd been passively hearing. I copied *Goo* onto a blank cassette tape and listened to it every single day for a full year. I started buying *Rolling Stone* or *Spin* whenever I saw that Sonic Youth was featured. In one of the issues in my collection, Kim Gordon wrote an article praising *Sassy*, a magazine for teen girls.

When I was in the eleventh grade, I convinced my mom to get me a subscription

other zine makers from various places. We exchanged mixed tapes, too. My high school friend Dave followed the band Cub around on tour and had lots of weirdo punk rock penpals. He made me mixed tapes, too. His were always the best.

Other ways I discovered new music as a teenager included:

- Reading an article in *Rolling Stone* that comedian Julia Sweeney wrote about how much she loved Jonathan Richman.

- Following cute boys with cool band shirts around the local amusement park and asking them what other bands they were into.

- Reading liner notes on albums by bands I liked and seeing what bands they thanked.

- Paying attention when an opening act was actually not garbage.

- Scanning the ads for new bands playing local clubs and trying to sneak in to nineteen+ shows whenever something sounded good.

- Staying up late to watch the alternative video show on MuchMusic or to listen to the

scribbled their phone number. Yes, I had to buy music strategically to stretch the cash I earned at my afterschool job at the library instead of downloading every single song I ever wanted.

But here's the thing: I am not a social person. I love my friends, but I'm anxious and introverted in new situations. If I could have sat happily in my teenage bedroom listening to bands on YouTube, I would have probably done irrevocable damage to my psyche. It was hard for me to make friends, talk to strangers, and ask questions in records stores, but I forced myself to do it because living without new music was a less attractive alternative. Forcing myself to do those things taught me how to exist in the world and showed me that I was unlikely to brutally humiliate myself just because I asked the dreadlocked guy behind the counter where the punk section was. Valuable lessons.

This past June, as I've done every year since he was born, I took my son Milo to the Ottawa Explosion Weekend punk music fest. He's now three and half years

If I could have sat happily in my teenage bedroom listening to bands on YouTube, I would have probably done irrevocable damage to my psyche.

to *Sassy* as a Christmas gift. There was a tiny column in the magazine called "Cute Band Alert." One issue featured Bikini Kill. Another featured The Lemonheads. And then Helium, and Mary Lou Lord, and Bratmobile. I didn't immediately buy records from every band profiled, but I remembered all the names for when I went downtown to the big record stores and browsed through the bins. My friend Rakhi's cool older brother once picked up a *Sassy* issue I'd brought to her house, intending to make fun of it. "Whoa," he said, after scanning the table of contents. "There's an article on The Replacements in here!" Encouraged by his approval, I was downtown the next weekend, buying as many used Replacements albums as I could find at the secondhand music store.

Soon, also spurred on by *Sassy*, I started making zines and trading them with

amazing underground music show, *Brave New Waves*, on CBC public radio.

Ways I did not discover new music as a teenager:

- The internet. The internet did not really exist when I was in high school. I cannot wait to blow my kids' minds someday when they are old enough to understand that their mom predates the internet.

I am actually delighted that I was well into my adulthood before email, social media, and music downloads became commonplace. Yes, finding music required more effort in the days of yore. Yes, I always lost touch with cool people (and cute boys) who I met at shows because I couldn't look them up on Facebook when I inevitably lost the zine or ripped envelope onto which they'd

old, so this was his first year of being very aware of what was happening. He doesn't like all the music that I play at home, but a few of his favorites—namely Worriers and Shellshag—were scheduled to perform. Worriers' set was scheduled way past his bedtime. Shellshag had van trouble and didn't make it. But he said he wanted to go anyway. When we arrived at the outdoor venue, I introduced him to Lauren and Lou from Worriers. He noted immediately that he and Lou had the same haircut. That was enough to satisfy that particular corner of his fandom. He was game to watch the act who took Shellshag's place in the lineup, Mike Krol. Krol's band dressed up like old timey bank robbers, which was really the best case scenario for a band I was hoping a preschooler would be interested in watching.



MITCH CLEM

And so, I stood there watching him watch the band, feeling kind of choked up ■ he stared intently at the drummer and then moved closer and did ■ head-bobbing style of dance that he's developed specifically for watching bands. He made it through most of the set and then happily requested to go see his grandma, who was ■ call to pick him up when he got tired. The next day he asked to come back and see more bands.

Since then, whenever he hears ■ song he likes, he asks if we ■■ go see that band. He might never completely forgive ■■ for going to ■■ The Avett Brothers with my friend Martha instead of with him. And three nights ago when he w■■ exhausted and working up to a tantrum, he threw his stuffed monkey to the ground and sobbed, "AND I REALLY WISH I GOT TO SEE SHELLSHAG!"

I get it. I used to hate it when I had to miss bands, too. I never believed my mom when she told me that I'd have years to see bands play and I'd probably get to ■■ everything I wanted when I was a grown up. But I was pretty sad about him missing Shellshag too, especially because I'd gotten in touch with them ahead of time and they'd agreed to play his favorite song as part of their set. I thought it might blow his mind. Or maybe it wouldn't have, because he takes for granted that we interact with bands. Much like his assumption that all adults have tattoos (because all the adults he knows do), I think he assumes that all bands are made up of our friends. Or friends of our friends. To him, there's nothing strange about Hallie from The Unlovables pretending to eat the food he made in his play kitchen or Mikey

Erg sleeping on the floor of our living room.

Right now, Milo doesn't understand the difference between underground and mainstream music. He doesn't know that The Go-Go's and Blondie are more famous than Martha and Jabber. But what he does know is that we learn about music by talking to our friends and by going to see bands play. Right now he is living in his own version of the early nineties (albeit one where Netflix Kids somehow exists) and he is finding out about music the same way I used to. He recognizes the social effort that needs to be put forth in order to reap the true rewards of being a music fan. I can't take credit for everything great about him, but I'm totally taking credit for that.

—Jennifer Whiteford





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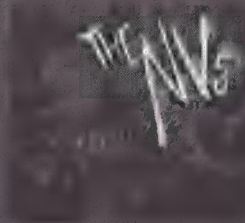
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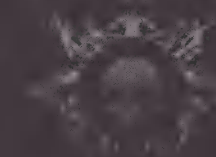
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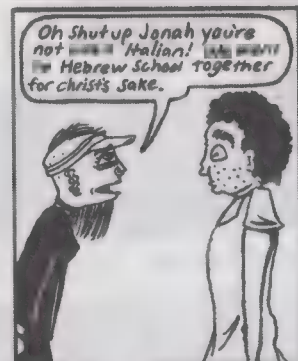
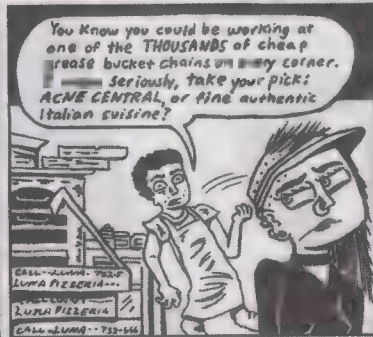
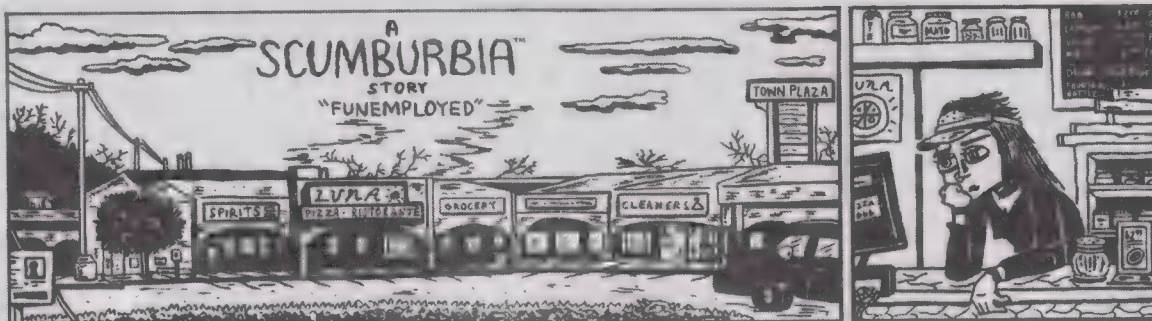
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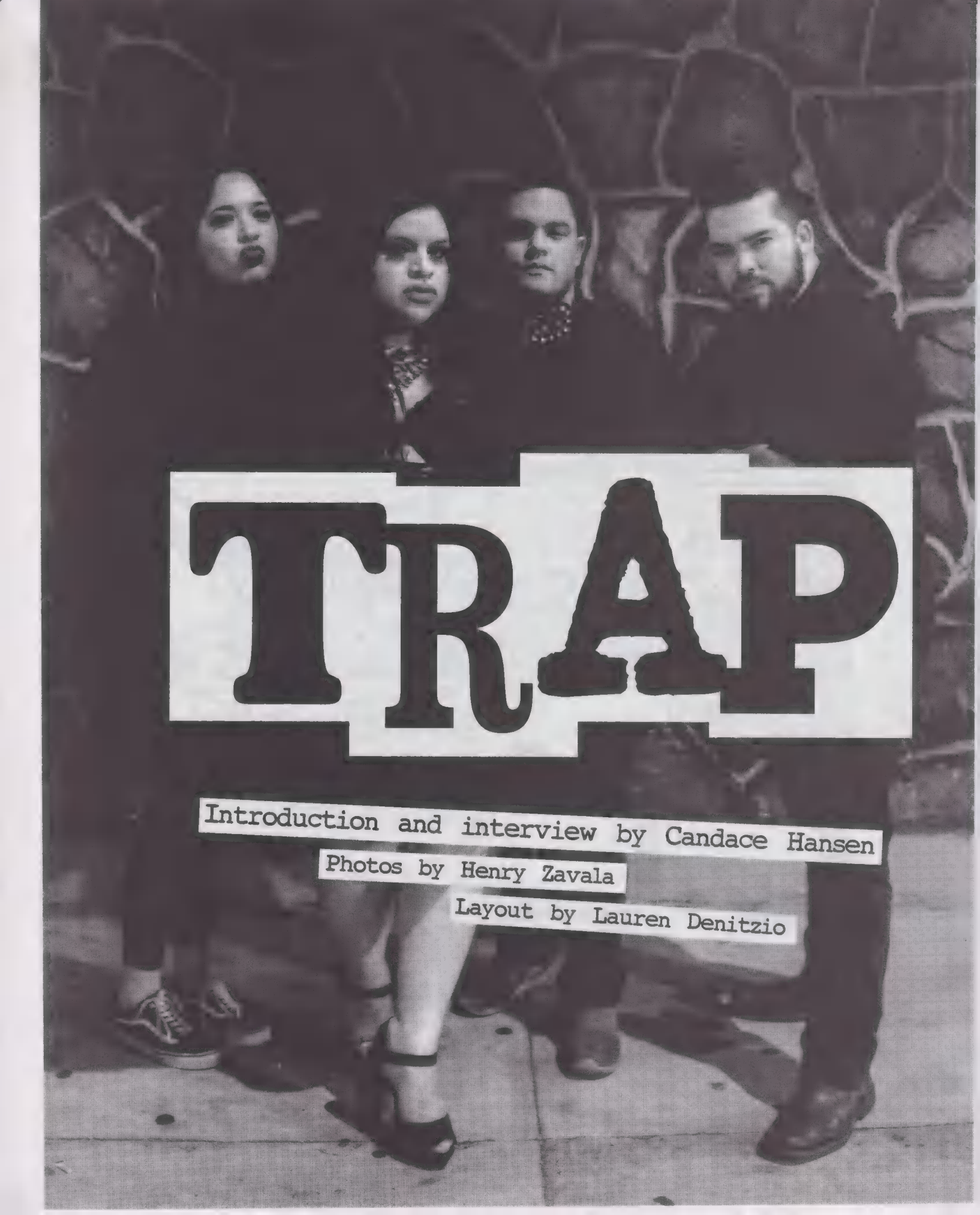


Exploding Eyes

COMING SOON:



SAM GAINBERG



TRAP

Introduction and interview by Candace Hansen

Photos by Henry Zavala

Layout by Lauren Denitzio

Trap Girl's music reminds me of when I simultaneously feel unsafe but am ready to throw down. Growing up working class, in an environment where sometimes you have to fight to live, that feeling is something that stays with you forever. But as a queer adult you feel a different yet persisting feeling. You're constantly living on the edge of safety or survival, may it be physically or financially. Trap Girl captures the essence of that moment when you realize you are going to have to do whatever it takes to survive. Their music is loud, gritty, impulsive, and powerful. It's also beautiful, like gold chiffon covered in blood, dirt, and glass. It shimmers and it cuts.

Sometimes it's messy. It fucks you up while giving you life. Trap Girl threatens to kill rapists, protect women, and look good while doing so.

I hung out with Trap Girl on a clear spring night. We chatted on the patio of a new DIY venue in Long Beach called The Forrest, the same space Trap Girl played Darcy Crash Distro's queer zine fest Zine Queens a few days before. The air was thick with crickets chirping, busses, and sirens. We talked about their roots, the L.A. punk scene, and the importance of physical spaces as gentrification fights to steal every last ounce of culture the tired clutches

of the underground. We discussed how queer punk elders helped us become the best babes we could ever imagine, an apprenticeship, through relationships in the flesh and fandom we never realized we had, but so desperately needed. Trap Girl's recording may never compare to their live shows, something you have to see. Trap Girl lives the legacy of classic L.A. hardcore punk greats like The Germs and The Bags while breathing confrontational and queer new life into the old punk formula. They're bringing new visibility to what it is to be trans, big, brown, glamorous, and fucking pissed in Los Angeles.

GIRL

Present at the interview:
Drew Arriola-Sands—Vocals
Jorge Reveles—Drums
Not present:
Ibette Ortiz—Bass
Esteban Moreno—Guitar

Candace: How did Trap Girl start?

Drew: Trap Girl started in 2014 out of frustration and anger of how things were going in our little city's scene. I've always been a musician, I've always loved music. I've always written songs and sang songs. But in our city (South Gate), there was a small indie and surf rock scene. I knew that I needed to adapt to that style to participate in the scene, but I never played it. I just did folk rock and things like that.

But I was met with rejection. I don't know if it's because I was queer, or trans, or fat. I don't know what the reason was. I know

I was not welcome. I had that anger and I had that frustration, and I did what I always do when I have those moments—write music. So what came out were the songs that we play today, which are angry and confrontational to the listener, because that's how I felt at the time. I wasn't in love, I was angry. So I had the energy to write those songs. I knew I needed to find people I could trust who felt the same way that I did.

The place for outcasts in the music world is punk rock. If you're gay, if you're queer, if you're trans, if you're fat, if you're dark, if you're bald, if you wear glasses—anything different about you—you're accepted in punk. You're front and center in punk rock more than any other scene. We celebrate our differences and we come together to express that. We encourage ourselves. I knew punk rock could take me there, as far as finding a place to express myself.

Candace: So you wanted to play folk before punk?

Drew: Well, because there were no other punk bands or punk musicians in our city. I've always been into rock music, always into punk. I was a punk at fourteen years old, but I wasn't really musically inclined. It wasn't until my twenties that I wanted to be part of a music scene. I didn't know there were queer punks. I didn't know there was a community of queer people, of punk people, of creative people outside of my city. I had to start Trap Girl to figure that out.

Candace: Why do you think that surf took over South Gate? Because when I used to go to South Gate...

Drew: It was a punk scene, with a ska scene!

Candace: I was in a ska punk band and we would play the Allen Theater like every weekend. We'd drive up from Garden Grove.



Drew: Well, we had a punk venue in our city, which brought all the punks there and had punk bands. But once that died out what was left through the sifter was that kind of retro revival that has been so popular the last eight years—Hawaiian shirts, and tight pants, and 1960s guitars, and vinyl, and listening to the Kinks and the Yardbirds.

Jorge: I ■■■ it happening when I started my first band. It's funny because it's a similar story. My first band came out of that ■■■■ anger, standing in the crowd, watching these bands, and saying, "Seriously? This is what you're playing? This is bullshit." All these bands who want to sound like Jim Morrison grew up listening to The Strokes. So it's this weird fucking thing where they're ■■■ copy of ■■■ copy of a copy. It sounds fine; there's just ■■■ soul in it. There's ■■■ heart in it. Around 2009, it just locally all started to go downhill from there.

Drew: And the punk just died. So when you're talking South Gate in 2004, when The Allen was on its last legs, this new scene came about and it's been like that ever since. And recently, even that scene is dying down so we almost have no scene now in our city.

Candace: Did y'all go to a lot of backyards growing up?

Drew: I did!

Jorge: My ■■■■ wouldn't let me. I couldn't even go to the Allen!

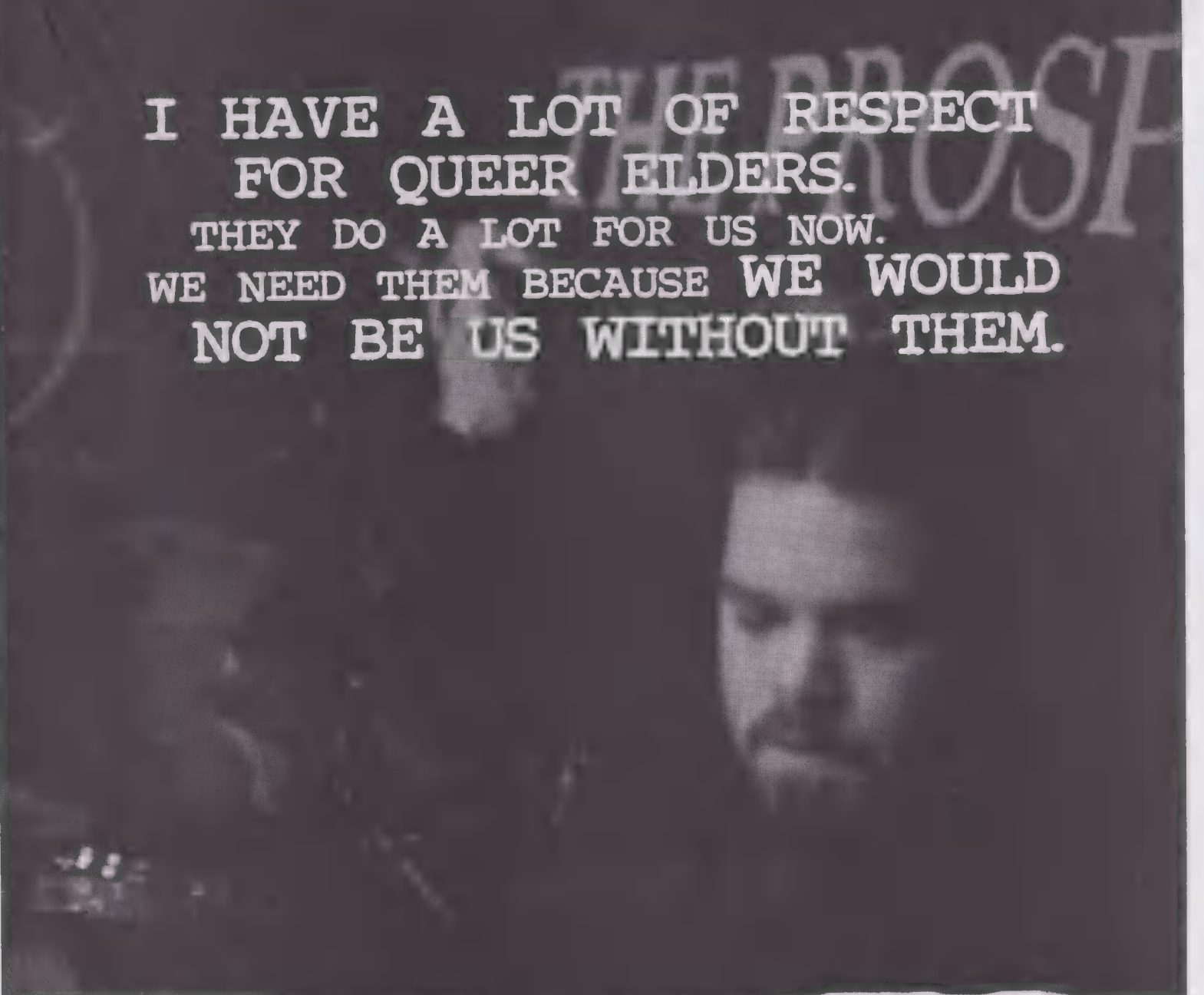
Candace and Drew: Really!?

Jorge: I wanted to. My friends would go and they would be like, "C'mon, sneak out!" But I just wasn't that kind of kid, you know. Luckily, I didn't have many problems with my parents so what they said went. It wasn't a live thing for me. I experienced punk through listening to punk music on mix CDs.

Drew: Not too many people know this, but there was a café right next door to the Allen, Café Kashmir. When I was fifteen, the Allen would never book us but the café would. I had my first little punk band and we would play there. Even at that age I felt like an outcast of the outcasts because we were not allowed in the Allen scene.

Candace: How did that impact you growing up, being ■■■ outcast of the outcasts?

Drew: I think that's where the drive comes from. I am ■■■ outcast. Queer people are outcasts since the day that we're born. And we feel like we're not accepted right off the bat. It has helped my drive, because I've had a lot of time alone. It's funny because being alone ■■■ ■ kid has made me not want to be alone as ■■■ adult. The worst times are when I'm alone. It makes ■■■ think of being alone, being younger. You're kind of exiled being gay, being



I HAVE A LOT OF RESPECT
FOR QUEER ELDERS.
THEY DO A LOT FOR US NOW.
WE NEED THEM BECAUSE WE WOULD
NOT BE US WITHOUT THEM.

weird, and being fat. You're not accepted. You are an outcast.

Candace: And I can relate to that too, juxtaposed in the Allen situation. My bands were playing the Allen, but I was in two bands with older guys. I was the only queer person in either band. I was fat. I was more femme presenting than I am now, but I also felt alone even around all of those people. There were probably nights I was sitting at the merch table alone, and you were sitting in the café alone, and Marin from Bruise Violet was doing sound alone... [laughter]

Drew: Me and Marin would hang out! She worked at the café and I would hang out there all night bugging her! Marin was my queer elder, and she was in my band. It's funny because never once did we discuss being gay, being queer, because we couldn't at that time. We just existed. And I looked at her as my queer sister but not actually knowing that

she was my queer sister. We didn't talk about gender issues. We talked about Hole. We talked about Veruca Salt, Babes In Toyland. We drank coffee and we hung out and we punched each other and we played music. We had no cell phones and no internet and we were both queer, but we didn't acknowledge it to each other.

Candace: What do you think the power in queer elders in the punk scene can be?

Drew: It's really important, because in ten years we're gonna be queer elders, even if we were just thirty-five and thirty-six.

Jorge: Is that math correct?

Drew: Yes! That's how punk works! In ten years when I'm thirty-six, I will be an elder, and so will you [pointing at Candace]. In ten years there's going to be a sixteen-year-old who's queer, who rocks a guitar and screams in a mic, and we have to be there to support. Us now being young and having our queer

elders, I have so much respect for them. The few queer people that we know who have become semi-celebrities in the punk scene, I try to see what they've done and how their path has gone. Things they've said "yes" to and "no" to. I try to follow that because they've been through it already.

Drew: I have a lot of respect for queer elders. They do a lot for us now. We need them because we would not be us without them. And there aren't that many. There is one handful, and some are dead.

Candace: Who are some queer elders that you look up to?

Drew: Well, right now—you know her and work with her—Alice Bag. I admire her so much and I look up to her so much because she is here with us. She has her feet in the dirt with us. She's not just behind a computer screen going "That was fantastic! Send!" [Pretends to send an email.] No, she's here!

And she's dirty with us. I really admire that. It gives me a lot of inspiration. The first time I met her I thought, "This woman is inspiring me, just her being in the audience."

And of course there are the tragic ones like Darby Crash who never really owned his queerness. I think he really was a victim of that time, and you can't really blame him for it. It was such a different time growing up in the '60s and '70s for gay men. He had to take that route. It's sad because he'd be totally cool now.

A big inspiration—she's dead too—is Divine. Another victim of her time. Being different, being ostracized, being gay-bashed as a kid, as a teen, and becoming this great thing, and then just disappearing and dying. That's a thing, too. A queer person becomes so bright and so great... and kind of just [snaps her fingers]. Their time is limited, sometimes.

Candace: Why do you think that is?

Drew: Can you imagine? So many of us feel alone now in a scene of queer people. I can't imagine thirty years ago being gay and being alone. In show business. This is show business. Everything is show business. So, if I were alone, if I didn't know you, I didn't know any queer person, and I were doing this thirty years ago, I would feel so alone, and I would have that pressure. I have pressure now—pressure between my temples, my nervous system. I'm anxious, I have anxiety, and I'm dealing with that, but I have the support. Forty years ago, being gay, being fat, being trans, in show business, in music, you're not gonna last. They went through that and we don't have to. We're just hanging out now and we're gay and we're queer. That's not gonna happen to us, because now we're not alone.

Candace: How do The Germs and Divine inform the music that you make and your performances?

Drew: Divine represented an absolutely glamorous person, but also an overweight person dressing and acting a way that an overweight person would never act or dress and perform. Darby Crash was completely insane and still able to have a career in music. A short career in music, but still be able, somehow, to manage it for that short period of time. So I take from both elements; the unconventional side of glamour and beauty from Divine, and the hard punk angst, aggression, craziness, and insanity, from The Germs, from Darby Crash. We try to take from both elements... always. Something beautiful with something insane. We always try to match those—in the music, in the look, in the theme of the artwork.

Candace: How do you construct your persona? I feel like you have a lot of Hollywood starlet, too.

Drew: I definitely do. It's like when you're a kid and you make believe, "I'm an alien." You know what I mean? I took that into this band, too. Like I'm the Trap Queen. I'm Griselda Blanco and Eva Gabor. I'm the most glamorous person you're ever gonna meet. I'm the most dangerous person you

ever are gonna meet. It's almost like what I have in my head comes out through Trap Girl. One thing that's lacking in punk rock is glamour. Trap Girl's look is what I wanted to see when I was in the backyards watching punk, because it wasn't part of the uniform. But I think we need to change that. There's all kinds of uniforms, and all kinds of ways you can express yourself that's not limited to spikes and patches. You can wear a feather boa and a diamond necklace and a six-foot stack of hair. That's punk rock.

Candace: And what's it been like for y'all playing those shows where it's just patches, leather, spikes...

Drew: It's great! Because they are seeing a different side of punk rock that they didn't know existed or that people wanted to see. But, from the reactions we've gotten, people do want to see it. People do become fans of it, just of the look alone. Right? [Looks at Jorge.]

Jorge: There's always a little bit of, "Oh, we should be careful," or, "We should be worried," but, luckily, it's never come back to bite us. But at the same time—even having those doubts, insecurities, and fears—shit,

we've never pulled a punch. Every single show we've ever done has had the same presentation, no matter what the venue is. What was that one bar that we played where everyone was dressed like aliens and there were old men there?

Drew: Akbar in Silverlake!

Jorge: Yeah! We did Akbar. That's one side. And then we did a backyard show with all the punks—problematic and probably not a gay person in the crowd—but those two shows felt the same to me from where I was sitting.

Drew: Akbar in Silverlake does Planet Queer, which is queer performance art all night: poetry, dance, experimental drag queens, and skits. And at the end, Trap Girl played. It was insane and they loved it. A week later, we played in East Los Angeles at a backyard, and they loved it. So that's how versatile we are, even though it's something you don't really see. We're dipping in these different scenes because we're coming across as honest, and we're giving it to you every time. You can't deny that. You want to be an asshole? Be an asshole. All we've ever wanted as a band is a demanding musical career, and that means giving everything at every show, no matter



where you're playing. Whether it's two hundred people or two people, they'll feel it. That's how we've been able to come across.

Jorge: Going back to stage presence. Sometimes the mask I wear (Jorge wears ■ black ski mask on stage), it becomes a uniform or a costume, but it's also ■ safety net. When I'm this, I'm not me, I'm something else. It's okay to be something else and not me. Every now and then I lose it and I'll go to a couple shows without it. It's ■ different performance without it, it's weird. It would be like if Drew ■■■■ out in jeans and ■ T-shirt. It's not the same. And so when that mask goes on, the second it goes over my face, I feel different. It informs the rest of the performance.

Drew: Yeah! You transform.

Jorge: It's like the mask is telling you that it's okay to just be someone else for thirty minutes, just get it out of your system. Then go back to your mundane fucking life on Monday morning. Everybody should be doing something that gives them that release. For us it's Trap Girl. Some people look at us

where you can do it. Queer Queens is saying thank you to those spaces.

Drew: I want it to be bigger. I want it to be better. I want sponsors and I want everything that any other kind of venue or club would get. Its sole purpose is for *our* queer community.

Candace: Which is amazing, and beautiful, and no one outside of Southern California knows that we're here. It's ■ bizarre.

Drew: Right. And were gonna keep doing it. Keep showcasing our queer people. Because it is important.

Candace: Spaces are so important. We're sitting here at The Forrest, ■■ amazing DIY space, but just thinking back to the Allen and how that was able to create ■ punk scene, look at what that ripple effect did for us. I've just been thinking about how spaces ■■ so quickly disappearing. You both book a lot of shows and those shows are important since creative spaces are slipping away.

Drew: That's the great thing about Queer Queens. We've had them at La Conxa, but we're trying to have it at different spaces

am," I had no idea I could write songs about that. I thought I had to write songs about girls. I thought we had to be skate punks, or that we had to be Blink 182. So that blew my mind! I had never heard anything that made ■■ feel like, it's okay to be me, it's okay that my parents aren't from here, I had to learn English, and I kind of have a funny accent when I'm not hanging around kids from the same place I'm from. That it's all okay. Music can accept you, or you can make it accept you.

Candace: What's your experience been like being a band that's queer, brown, and mad, going to places that don't have that?

Drew: It's good because we're the traveling circus. We open the cabinet of oddities, show people who have never seen it or heard it, close it back up, and we're on our way. And they know that it's out there—there's women out there, trans women out there, queer people. We're professional musicians and we're playing heavy music. It's not queer and trans people standing at Lilith Fair in 2016.

EVERYBODY'S DOING DRAG. WE'RE ALL PLAYING DRESS UP.

as weird, but I feel this... relief. I feel great.

Candace: I always think about that, because really anything anyone is ever doing is ■ form of drag.

Drew: Right. Everybody's doing drag. We're all playing dress up.

Drew: I even believe being ■ musician is ■ form of drag. I transform, you transform. You are ■ beast on the drums and here you're just like this really nice little person. It's really obvious, mask or not.

Candace: Why do you do think Queer Queens of LA and Beyond is necessary? Why do you do it?

Drew: Who would have thought I would be ■ lady promoter of the world? I'm doing it for the person I ■■ two years ago that people were rejecting, people didn't like, people didn't care, and people didn't even want to listen to. If you're ■ queer person, if you're a woman, and if you're making music and you need ■ break, Queer Queens gives you ■ break. We do them all year long, and we're gonna keep doing them. And we're featuring ■■ queer acts every single show. New queer acts, new female-fronted acts; this is where you can be showcased. This is where your audience is. This is where your home is.

Jorge: I think it's very much in the vein of people who gave ■■ shot when we were starting—people like Heart of Art Gallery in Los Angeles, Blood Orange Infoshop in Riverside—places that call themselves safe spaces. That can ■■■■ so much, and, musically, it also means if you've been rejected everywhere else. It's okay. Come here and sing. If you want to sit on the floor and make noise for three minutes, this is

to mix it up and have it different places, to change it up and represent different parts of Los Angeles. You can't close us down. You can't shut it down. It's on the road. And in a year we're gonna go cross country, picking up all the queer people in all the states! [giggles] On ■ giant unicorn! [laughter]

Jorge: You've got to sit on the front!

Drew: On the horn? [Laughter. Jorge drums out ■ ba-dum-cha with his feet.]

Candace: There's always a lot of nostalgia for L.A. punk. How do you think L.A. punk has stayed in that *Decline of Western Civilization* vein, but also changed?

Drew: Well, the way it has stayed the ■■ is that the coolest punk is in Los Angeles. It was cool in 1977 here in LA. It's cool now because we have some of the best punk bands in the world here—and for queer punk too, we have the best bands here. That's how it hasn't changed. The way it's changed in ■ positive way is there's a *looooooot* of brown people, a lot of my Latino people that I see and that I love to see.

Candace: How do you think that's influenced punk in general?

Jorge: It's important for us because it's ■ whole different set of issues. The kind of oppression that poor white kids face is different than the kinds of things that Latinos face. It's not better or worse. It's just different. Hispanic and Mexican kids ■■ now using this ■■ way to talk about their issues.

There's ■ band I grew up ■■ called Left Out. They changed their name ■ couple times, but they had a song called "Brown's ■ Color." And the lyric was like "Brown's ■ color / I can't change it / this is the way I

You better watch out. Everyone's jaws are on the ground, and we're back in the car and back on the road.

Jorge: It doesn't matter to me if there is any hate in the crowd, as long as there's one person who identifies with us, that makes them feel okay. Fuck the haters. That's not why we do it.

Candace: Have y'all had haters?

Drew: They've always been behind ■ computer screen.

Jorge: Or it becomes part of the banter. Like is this person trying to stage flirt? The rest has been hate mail. Hate comments. Hate voicemails.

Candace: Hate voicemails?

Drew: Yeah, we did get one hate voicemail. This person went to ■ show and somehow got my phone number. And it goes back to, "Is this person flirting or hating on me?" I don't know and I don't care.

Candace: Didn't an audience member think you were a working dominatrix?

Drew: Yes. Several times.

Jorge: San Diego. That girl kept telling you to hit her harder.

Drew: I don't remember that! I just remember her asking me if I was a mistress.

Jorge: Really? I thought I remembered when you guys were bawling on the floor, she was telling you...

Drew: No, she was touching me!

Candace: Y'all were bawling?

Drew: No! Sorry, I was bawling with Mitchell (a close friend of Drew's who regularly shows up to shows and willingly gets beat up by Drew on stage) and when I got off of Mitchell, I said that I was looking



for new fuckboys or new slaves. At the end of the show, I said we have shirts for sale or for trade by touch or something like that. So when I was on the floor at the end of the song, the girl who was a slave was caressing my—betwinned me—down there! Because I announced it.

Jorge: I had a front row seat to that!

Drew: She was touching me, and she did ask ■■■ if I was ■ mistress, and the reason she needed to know was because she was a slave and she needed ■ spanking.

Jorge: They were really friendly in San Diego. I got ■■ unexpected kiss there, too.

Drew: Oh really? Daaaamn! It was a fun house. It was an afro-punk house with ■ bunch of trans men and a chore wheel.

Candace: Did they actually do the chores?

Jorge: It didn't smell like they did the chores!

Candace: I've never been to a punk house where more than one begrudging person actually does the chores.

Jorge: It pisses me off. I grew up in ■ house where you just had to do the fucking chores. Why do we have to spin a wheel?

Drew: So if you spin it and the toilet scrubbing falls on your name, then you do it, right?

Jorge: Exactly. For the week.

Drew: Aw, man!

Jorge: If you see something's dirty, just take it out! Just grab the Windex and go for it. Why does it have to be the way it is?

Drew: That was a fun show. We've had a lot of experiences. They've all been great. People are very loving and very sweet. The only bad things have been behind a computer screen, and I'm happy for that.

Candace: How do you write your songs?

Drew: They have to be from personal experience and I have to feel it or me to be

able to write anything. I have to identify with whatever I'm singing about in every song, and I do in every song. I've got to have ■ melody, of course, and play around with it and present it to the band. We put it together.

Candace: Do you ever think about how you're going to perform, since Trap Girl is so performative?

Drew: No. Our guitarist Steve has said, "You should plan what you're gonna do on stage so, as a band, we know. I told Steve, 'No! That's not what Trap Girl is.' Trap Girl is spontaneous. Every show is different. The banter is different, the jokes are different, the looks are different.

Candace: The lineup's different! [laughter]

Drew: The lineups? No! Wait a minute. [laughter]

Candace: I'm just fucking with you.

Drew: The dresses are different colors, the chignon is different colors, the hair is different colors. I could be ■ blonde, I could be a brunette. I haven't been a redhead yet.

Candace: So why is Trap Girl the *most* dangerous band in L.A.?

Drew: Because we represent every type of minority, and we're doing it with ■ passion, ■■ aggression, and it is unpredictable. We're gonna be the heaviest, the hardest, and the craziest. That's what danger is to me, the unpredictability of what's going to happen at ■ Trap Girl show.

Candace: There's a lot of sexual energy in your music, but also danger and violence. How do you use things that are sometimes so damaging for so many people, but then use them both for empowerment and as a vehicle?

Drew: I think there is empowerment in sex and in violence, depending on how you see it. A woman who was just attacked and is fighting back is finding that empowerment

in violence. A person wearing ■ condom also protecting themselves and fighting back in ■ way, through sex and taking care of themselves. And ■ woman, or ■ man, or anyone who is doing sex work, they're putting themselves in danger. This is their employment and they don't ■■ it as negative. Well, maybe they do, but it's something they have to do. There is empowerment in that also. I don't think sex work is negative.

Candace: I don't think so, either.

Drew: We have a new song about women and queer people carrying concealed weapons because we are targets for violence. It's called "Ivory Handle." If sex workers, queer people on the street, or women were attacked, had ■ concealed weapon, and were able to protect ourselves—it's either us or the attacker, who is frequently a man. Most of the time, it's the attacker. But in this song, she's finding power in protecting herself. She's safe, and she knows that if someone's coming out from the left, she can defend herself and not be killed. It's important for us to protect ourselves. If you're a walking target—which many of ■■ are, which I am—it makes ■■■■ to always know that we have to protect ourselves.

Candace: I can understand that, especially in a political moment with so much awful hate speech.

Drew: A lot of hate speech going on. A lot of unnecessary hate things. Our new music now is really empowering queer people, empowering trans people, empowering women to make sure we're safe. Queer people can't wait for Superman. We have to do it ourselves. I'm *not* promoting going out and killing people. I'm just promoting the fact that we have to make sure that we feel safe. We don't put ourselves in environments where we can get hurt. That we're not in an area that we're not accepted. We have to always be conscious of these things. There is safety in numbers. We have to stick together and if we don't feel safe where we're at, we have to leave. It's that message I want to push across with the new songs. I feel like the more I hear these terrible stories about violence against trans women, it's when a woman is alone and nobody knows what happened. So songs like that ■■■ reminders for all of us to be safe, regardless of what kind of environment we are in or what part of town, or club, or show we ■■ at—even ■■■■ that we may perceive as safe, no matter what letter we are in the LGBTQ acronym.

Candace: Do you think Trap Girl is shifting the narrative of trans women in L.A.?

Drew: I think it's showing that trans women are not limited. It's showing that trans people can make music. And they're not limited at all, we're not. But it does show ■ certain face of trans women in L.A. making music. And I hope that continues with ■■■■ trans musicians emerging in Los Angeles. If you want to take "Ivory Handle" ■■ ■■ trans anthem about safety, you can. But I'm writing for all of us who feel unsafe. Women, queer people, and trans people—not just one—because we're all together. We all feel unsafe.

Candace: Y'all ■■■ the first punk band I've heard talk about sex work in a long time. I

feel like in riot grrrl stuff and with the Sex Workers Art Show in the '90s, it was talked about, but that stuff has dwindled away. I don't know why.

Drew: It should be talked about more. A lot of people I know in the music scene have gone through sex work. So through that, we all have experiences with it. We all know someone who has done it, or who have bought it. Whether it was ten years ago or yesterday, girls working online with webcam shows, or little sites, or on the street the old school way, there are people in our scene who have had to do sex work.

It's not bad at all. It's a form of work. It's a huge industry, and that shame needs to come off of it. I was always a weird kid and was influenced by prostitutes. HBO used to run prostitution documentaries. *Hookers and Johns* was Las Vegas, *Hookers at the Point* was New York, and *Prostitution in Honolulu* or something like that where it was all trans hookers in Honolulu. They had this documentary miniseries on HBO when I was about ten years old where they would show the lives of the prostitutes and I was in love with them. In love with their look, in love with their behavior, their interviews,

and everything they stood for I thought was fabulous.

Even that danger, where this girl said, "Oh well, I had this guy who wanted me to hammer nails into his pee hole." In my ten-year-old ears, I thought, "This is amazing!" I wasn't disgusted. I wasn't turned off. I wasn't scared. I was so intrigued that I wanted to learn more about them—before internet, before anything—that's what I watched and was inspired by, apart from the music I have always loved. And it kind of went into this.

Candace: I know drag is really important to you, too.

Drew: I love all the John Waters films. Like *Female Trouble*, *Pink Flamingos*. I also loved all the girls that Andy Warhol worked with, like Candy Darling, Holly Woodlawn, Jackie Curtis, the Warhol Girls who were trans girls, and, of course, Divine and everything she did with John Waters. I knew they were different before I knew I was different. I wanted to know more about the lady in question. I wanted to know about Candy Darling. Who is she? Who was she? What happened to her? Same thing with Divine. Who is she? What's going on? I knew I felt like them. They're in the entertainment business, they're making

music and movies, they're trans. They're queer. They're punk in the '60s and early '70s. I wanted to know how I could be what they are.

Punk and drag are similar. It's all expression. Drag is limitless just like punk is limitless. You can do whatever you want in punk just like you can do whatever you want in drag. If you glue a shoe to your forehead—that's drag. I love the way you can express yourself so freely and so openly. As a kid I loved how beautiful drag was. In my opinion, drag is punk. It goes back to being an outsider and being unaccepted, it's an escape for them. And that's exactly what punk is as well, an escape.

Candace: Do you think the straight punk world could take a lesson from drag?

Drew: Of course, and they have! A lot of straight punk bands have taken from gay culture and from drag culture! Even now! Isn't Fat Mike wearing dresses now?

Jorge: Yeah, well he's a sub now. His wife's a dom and he's into the humiliation.

Candace: As if dressing like a woman is a form of humiliation.

Drew: Well, he's wearing dresses at shows right now. Punk has always borrowed from

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gay culture and from drag culture. That's how it's always been and always gonna be. That's what punk allows you to do—to take whatever you want, to borrow it and use it for your expression.

Jorge: I think before I even knew what ■ drag queen was, I remember seeing punk musicians I looked up to wearing dresses on stage. Billy Joe Armstrong, Kurt Cobain; to me it was never disrespectful, it was being different.

Drew: It's being an outcast. That's ■ form of drag, and they're taking from drag.

Jorge: Well they didn't have makeup. Just the same man, but wearing a dress.

Drew: Well, I've seen some makeup. I've seen the Murder Junkies in full make up with wigs and dresses. Even Kurt Cobain was in ■ flower dress with full wig and red lip stick. They take, and drag gives openly, because drag is for everyone.

Candace: What's the future for Trap Girl?

Drew: The future for Trap Girl is to continue being who we are, to release our new EP, continue touring, and to be at the top of our game. To continue being the best band in Los Angeles. [Makes funny explosion sound.]

Jorge: You don't shoot for mediocrity. It doesn't mean you have to be pretentious, but fuck if you're going to do it, do it.

Drew: It takes ■ a lot of time to get into Trap Girl clothes, Trap Girl hair, Trap Girl makeup, but it reminds me that this is all I've ever wanted. I can't give you anything else,

because that's not me. I'm gonna do it every fucking time. Jorge has seen me putting eyelashes, and my hair, and makeup on in the dark on the freeway with no mirror and no light because I have to do it.

Jorge: I worry if I finish the set and nothing hurts. There are nights when I'm like, "This thing hurts," and I'm like, "Good!" That means I did something different, I did something dangerous, I did something new. Something happened. I like that.

Drew: Look at this: you see that? [Shows off ■ giant bruise.] I fell on my shoulder! I left that show and was like, "Oh, I fucked up my ■■■ and I was in pain."

Jorge: Remember when we did La Conxa the first time and I threw myself into Nancy's amp?

Drew: I just remember he did this weird flip from one side of his drum set to the other.

Jorge: I just saw ■ line from where I was

sitting. I didn't know what I was gonna do. I just went through it. But the thing I hit first was the corner of Nancy's amp, and I had the biggest welt from that. My favorite was when you—the stage was as high as this table!

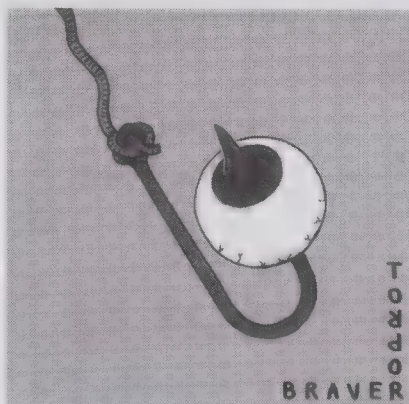
Drew: Oh yeah! I stage dived into nothing! [laughter]

Jorge: You did ■ full "King of the World" into nothing. [Puts his arms out like Leonardo DiCaprio in *Titanic*]

Drew: At Perez Tire Shop, I was on a stage made out of pallets and milk crates, and Raymond (formerly L.A.'s Boozebum) was in front of me. I was just going at it, and in that second, I thought it was ■ quarter of the distance. I let myself go, and as I was falling. I was like, "Oh, this is really high up..." [laughter]

Jorge: Did you feel half ■ second of weightlessness?

Drew: Yes! I was like, "Wow this is taking a long time to get to the ground." I cut my



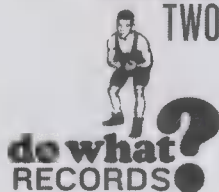
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finger open. I fucked up my knee. That was scary. When we left the show I thought I couldn't walk!

Jorge: It wasn't even the last song! It kind of stopped the show for a second.

Drew: I got up and I was like, "I'm fine you guys!" and dragged my leg.

Candace: What do you hope people take away from your shows?

Drew: It's important for queer and trans people to keep making music to show younger people who are scared that it's okay and they can also make music. It's important to show kids that they can do it and they're not alone. In 2016, yes, it's more acceptable to be queer, but there are still queer kids who are afraid and who are alone.

Jorge: And if you don't see people who look like you in music, in acting, in politics, that means that there is space for you to be the first. Don't be scared to be the first, to be a trailblazer. Do it for someone else who might be in your shoes.

Candace: It's so important. There are bands that I can look back on listening to and feeling like they grabbed through the stereo and made me felt seen for the first time.

Drew: That's exactly how I felt when I heard a lot of queer artists. And one of the reasons it's so important is because I can't think of too many.

Candace: So many of us we were severed from our queer elders because people couldn't be out, people aren't really always out now. So to have out bands or out elders, I think it gives younger queer, and women, and chubby punks a chance to see a potential for some kind of queer future, it gives them some hope.

PUNK AND DRAG ARE SIMILAR. IT'S ALL EXPRESSION.

Drew: Kids come up to us, or send us messages on Facebook and are like, "Listen, I saw you here, and I've never seen anything like you guys. Thank you." I never like to talk about that because I think it's kind of personal, for them telling me that. So I'm not just sitting on it, like, "Hmmm yes, send it to print! Someone's inspired!" They will usually say, "I want to do the [blank] thing." And I'll always write back. "Yes. Do it. I will help you." I mean, I'm nothing. I'm no one. I just do what I love, and if you love it just as much as I do, do it. You're gonna have a great time making music and it's gonna be so much fun. You're gonna do a lot of great things, if that's what you want to do.

Some people think like, "I'm just a little gay boy and I can't do anything," but that's not true! I was told that, by family members who make music. They said I'd never be able to do this. I was told that I was not a musician, but I am. Kids need to be told that they can do it, and not the opposite, which is what a lot of people tell kids and queer people. I love being as femme as I can.

Jorge: In the beginning, we used to say that we have someone for everyone in our band.

Drew: It's true! When we started, we had women, we had men, we had queer people, straight people, we had white people, brown people, fat people.

Jorge: There was a lot of power in that. I don't want to say that we sucked—we kind of did—but again it was that same attitude.

Drew: It was sloppy, but we were still giving it our all.

Jorge: The music wasn't there yet, but the words, the identity was there from day fucking zero. And we have to represent that. We run the gamut of what things should be. It doesn't have to be four dudes who look the same, or four women who look the same. Why can't it be a grab bag? Why can't you be a band that has a queer drummer and whatever different members? I like that. In my fucked-up, optimistic kind of head, that's what the world should be. I don't give a shit. You do your thing, I'll do mine.



Gentlemen Prefer Blood—made up of an amateur comedian, a doctor, and a scruffy-looking nerf herder—bring the right amount of intensity and aggression to the world of DIY. The well-thought, heavy riffs intertwine with the gritty vocals and lock into the Animal-style drumming, creating a solid sound. GPB's version of self-expression is a reflection of their appreciation of music. They cite Face To Face as one of their musical influences.

The Los Angeles based trio was one of the first bands I got into that included members I didn't go to high school with. They drew me in simply because their albums *Illegal! Not Carbohydratum* and *Used Books and Guns* were not like the records I was so accustomed to hearing. Each song is genuine and filled with substance. At their shows, they consistently create an inviting space where everyone is included in on the fun that they bring on stage. Ultimately, Gentlemen Prefer Blood stay true to themselves in a town full of Guns N' Roses wannabes.

Megan: Gentlemen Prefer Blood: What ■■■ you referencing?

Todd: I started the band and I wanted to name it after a Rudimentary Peni song. I didn't know which one, so I wrote down five of them. ■ showed people. The majority picked Gentlemen Prefer Blood.

Megan: Do you like your name?

Todd: I totally regret it now. [Laughter]

Jason: Yeah, it doesn't work now. People's first impressions are, "Oh, it's like ■ metal band?" Or "Are you guys Dracula?"

Todd: Or Black Veil Brides.

Todd Taylor: What were the other Rudimentary Peni songs?

Todd: "Crime of the Century" was another option. "Arkham Hearst" was ■ close second, but Jason was worried about the batman references. Visually, "Arkham Hearst" looks great—way better than Gentlemen Prefer Blood. So I have to be more creative graphically.

Jason: He's ■ graphics guy.

Megan: What does Gentlemen Prefer Blood do that your former bands didn't?

Todd: Well for me—I was in Big In Japan and The Gain—I can talk into the microphone in this band. [Laughter]

Jason: Todd came into those bands as ■ hired gun. He's ■ good guitar player. He was there giving it all for their band, but this is his show now. He's writing the songs.

Todd Taylor: So, you guys [to Jason and Michael] are the new Todds? [Laughter]

Jason: Todd and I actually played together when we were kids. I went away to school in Chicago just ■ he was joining Big In Japan, came back out here, and he's like, "Hey, I'm putting another band together. We should get back together." So we did.

Megan: [to Michael] How did you meet up with these guys?

Michael: I was at a show. I was pretty drunk and I heard Jason talking to people about going on tour. They needed a drummer because their drummer couldn't do it. I butted in because I really liked the band, "Uhh, I play drums." [Laughter]

Todd: It was really so quick and simple. He was like "Oh! I'll do it!" "Oh, okay."

Michael: I just wanted to go and try something different.

Todd: It was already booked and thank god we clicked.

Michael: The first text message I got from Jason was like, "Were you really serious about that or were you just being drunk?" [Laughter] And I was like, "Both."

Todd: He did that tour, then our drummer officially quit, and Mike's like, "I'll drum for you full time." That was it.

Megan: So who has the strongest personality when it comes to writing the songs?

Jason: Todd. He writes probably like ninety, eighty-five percent of the stuff. We'll tweak the songs here and there, but he's writing most of the songs.

Michael: I've come to him with a couple of songs and they don't sound close to what I would think they would be. He can take some of the chords that I showed him and then at the next practice—like ■ couple days later—he goes, "Hey, I think I got something here."

Todd: Yeah, if it works it works. One of the songs I showed Mike at practice—"Dude, I made a song out of the chords you showed me!" I show it to him and he's like, "That's not at all what I showed you. No, this is the one chord I showed you." [Laughter] They're really forgiving and open about ■■■ bringing in songs.

Megan: What did any of you want to be when you grew up?

Michael: Well, I wanted to be a Jedi.

Todd: Still do. [Laughter]

Michael: Still do. I wanted to be a baseball player. I was really serious about it for ■ long time. I played baseball all the time.

Todd Taylor: What position?

Michael: Mainly I was outfield. I got scouted by the Braves for a short while. They were scouting somebody else but then they noticed that I was doing really well. But then they just concentrated on that guy. They got my information and stuff but after that it was pretty much music.

Todd Taylor: At what level was that?

Michael: I was in pony, actually.

Todd Taylor: What's pony?

Todd: For your band mates, what's pony?

Todd Taylor: It's baseball with horses. [Laughter]

Michael: Pony league is the next level up from Little League. Or high school.

Jason: Growing up, I loved reading and writing. When I was younger, I wanted to be an English professor or teacher.

Megan: How did that turn out?

Jason: Not too well. [Laughter] I ended up going to school and I had to take out ■ bunch of loans. I was like, "Oh my god, I'll never pay this off being ■ English teacher." The notion of being ■ English teacher or ■ writer and getting graded or judged on something like that seems so subjective to me. It would be so weird for someone to tell me, "What you wrote is okay." Like, how do you measure that? I thought science was more measurable, something that's right or wrong kind of thing. So I ended up going into the sciences.

Todd: I think I wanted to do graphics as a little kid. I just wanted to be around graphics. I love skateboard art. I loved all that stuff. Even punk rock when I had no idea what it was. I loved visually what it was; I just wanted to do that.

Todd Taylor: What would you go back to drawing over and over?

Todd: I used to draw 4x4 trucks. [Laughter]

Todd Taylor: I was thinking heads of skeletons.

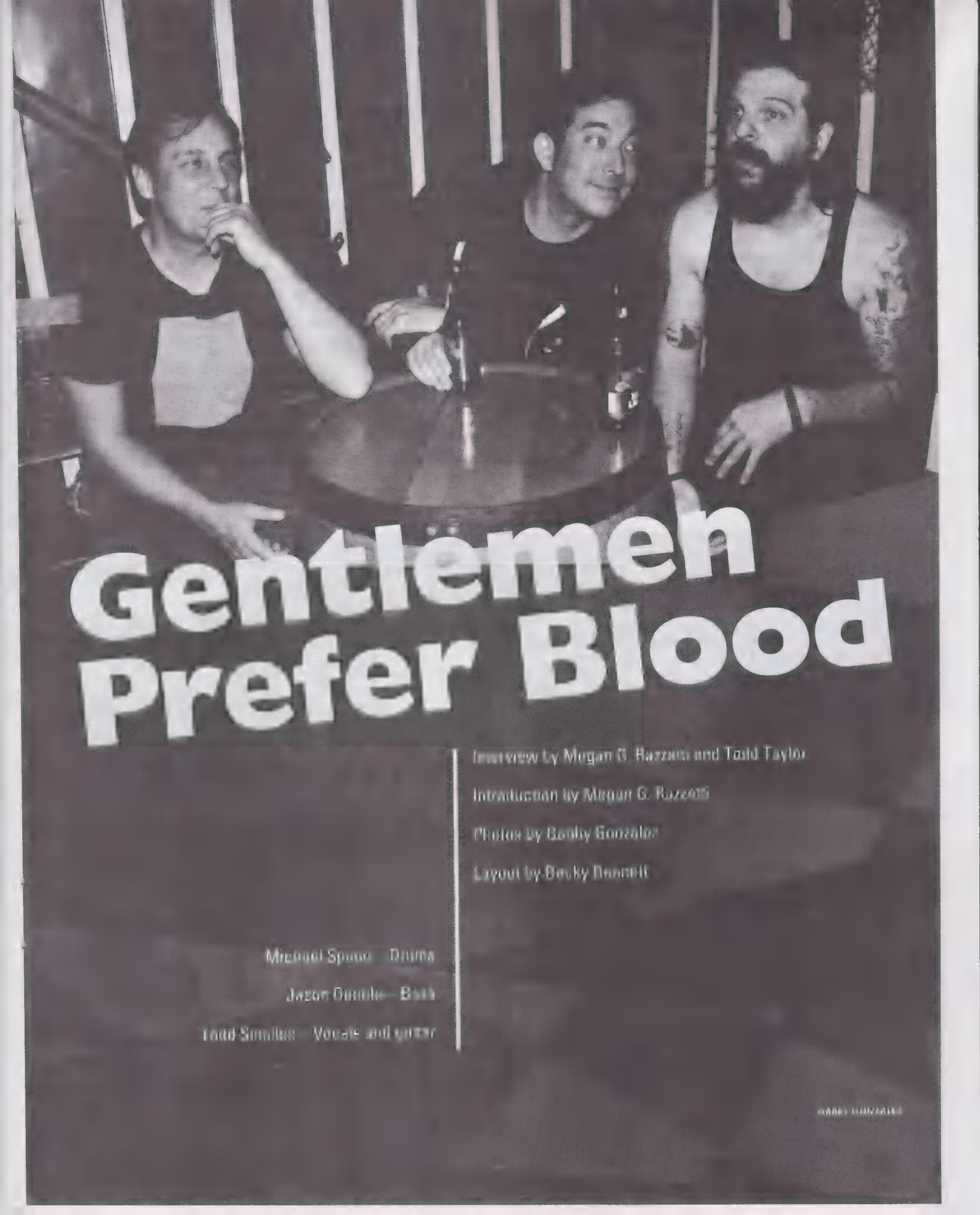
Todd: I never drew skeletons but I would trace skateboarders in skate magazines.

Megan: What grown-up thing have you started doing recently?

Jason: I have kids, so learning how to take care of them. It's a wonderful thing but it's also the hardest thing. It's like you're around two psychotic people constantly.

Todd Taylor: How old are they?

Jason: Five and three. One moment it's pure joy and love and the next moment they're screaming and you want to strangle them, but that's like twenty times in ■ day.



Gentlemen Prefer Blood

Interview by Megan G. Razzetti and Todd Taylor

Introduction by Megan G. Razzetti

Photos by Barry Gonzalez

Layout by Becky Brunell

Michael Spino — Drums

Jason Double — Bass

Todd Similan — Vocals and guitar

Dealing with that is kind of fun. Growing up: don't strangle.

Todd: [to Michael] You got a dog.

Michael: I live with my girlfriend and we have a dog. That's pretty much it. I'm not quite where you guys are at yet. Soon.

Jason: A looming reality. [Laughter]

Megan: How did you find punk rock?

Todd: The very first punk rock record I've ever heard was Suicidal Tendencies. That blew my mind. I was seven or eight years old—"I saw your mommy, and your mommy's dead"—the lyrics that they were singing. I was like "What?!" I don't know how I heard it. Then I started skateboarding—just, eleven, ten years old—and I saw punk rock and saw the visuals. I was, "I like how they look. I have got to get involved in this world." That was my whole thing.

Jason: Yeah, I transferred to his school. I had trouble at my other school. I got expelled for bad behavior. At the time I had long hair. I smoked weed and was a surfer. I looked up to Jeff Spicoli.

Todd: He was my idol.

Jason: I'd walk past Todd in math and him and his friends would make fun of me, like, "Dude, eh," just talking shit. My older brother in the late '80s was in a hardcore band called Society Gone Madd. They went on into the '90s doing stuff, too. He was my

frame of reference for punk rock. I would sneak into his room and steal his albums, steal his shirts to wear to school. We had a ramp we built in the backyard and all the bands would be playing at our house—like this dirty punk house kind of thing—and so that is where I got into it.

Todd: That's where we both got heavily involved in it.

Jason: At one point we had a mutual friend Vince, who wanted to start a band. He's like, "Oh Todd, he's a great guitar player," and he kind of got them together. I remember going to your house [to Todd] for the first time, the door opens, and I'm like "I know you! You're in my math class!" [Laughter]

Todd: It was so Spicoli. He's like "Oh no way, I know you."

Todd Taylor: What was the name of the band?

Todd: We were called Blank.

Michael: A Blank.

Jason: With an A, yeah.

Michael: My brother was about five, six years older than me so he got into punk when he was getting into high school. I was still in elementary school but he got into Blink, Green Day, and all that stuff. I would listen to whatever he would listen to. Then I kind of started moving on. I really dove into it. I got into Crass—that was my first tattoo—and it just kind of went from there.

Todd: Downward spiral from there on.

Megan: What do you struggle with the most in a group?

Todd: This is probably going to annoy a lot of bands but, we don't really argue at all. They're so open and they trust me—just write whatever, we'll play whatever, and hopefully we'll lock in and that's it.

Michael: We're pretty open to our flaws, too. Like, "Hey, you're doing a little too much here. Can you tone it down?" "Totally. Whatever helps the song out." That's just our focus. We want the song to be strong on its own.

Todd: And different-sounding, too.

Todd Taylor: This is for Todd, since you write most of the lyrics. What themes do you come back to?

Todd: I always come back to a yearning because there have been a lot of deaths in my life. There's a sense of always wanting. Certain songs have a hook that gives me a chill and accommodates that yearn, so every song I write musically and lyrically. I try to accommodate that whole. It's typically about somebody who has died or a relationship that I had in the past.

Jason: When we were first starting out, Todd had a song called "In Regards," which is about his mom who had passed away. I had a song called "JAG," which was about my



nephew who had committed suicide. We bonded over it.

Todd: It was a very quick bond. I try to do self-affirming but nothing too like every other band out there. You know, just dropping positive phrases. I try to be a little more creative in that sense, in the delivery.

Todd Taylor: And I am assuming that creating the songs is cathartic in certain ways.

Todd: Very much.

Todd Taylor: Do you think the songs are more written for the people who have passed, or for you, or for your audience?

Todd: They're for me exclusively almost. Then again, they like the songs, too.

Todd Taylor: "I'm just looking at these

bigger design was up front—I'd do that. I'd wear sweats, then shorts over the sweats.

Todd Taylor: And you're in Southern California so you definitely need sweats.

Todd: No, no. In '85 it was ridiculous.

Michael: In my mind, I have you wearing that but as you now. [Laughter] It's hilarious.

Todd: I would if I could, but it would look really bad.

Todd: There's ■ part of me that's like, "Parents, you jerks. Why didn't you tell me anything? I don't know how photos work. I don't know they last forever." [Laughter]

Todd Taylor: Because the internet is here, that's just not going to disappear for the next generation.

an adult age: "It's your call. Do whatever you want." But, Catholic school, as far as I was concerned, is like any other school. It was just another way of growing up.

Todd Taylor: What's something that you learned in school that you recently applied? Because I will say, as a Boy Scout, I use those knots all the time and I'm always surprised when people don't know how to use knives.

Todd: Or when people fiddle with it...

Todd Taylor: Oh yeah! Like, "Don't put your fingers there! That's where the closey part comes." [Laughter]

Todd and Michael: The closey part.

Todd Taylor: That's where the ouches come from.

I loved punk rock when I had no idea what it was. I loved visually what it was; I just wanted to do that.

two guys [Jason and Michael] as two really attractive lumps of clay." [Laughter]

Todd: They're molded oh so nicely.

Michael: And we will take that.

Jason: Along those lines—that song "JAG" about my nephew—at the funeral I had to give the talk.

Todd and Todd Taylor: Eulogy.

Jason: Eulogy, yeah. And I had to whitewash it 'cause he was really sick. He was into drugs and you can't focus on the sad stuff with a eulogy. So writing that song—this is his eulogy.

Todd: This is the truth. I've never really been able to write for an audience either, primarily because I've never had one. [Laughter] This is the sad reality. I've never been like, "Man, if I can write to fifteen-hundred people, would they sing along?" So this is just for our sake, I guess.

Megan: So can you explain in detail one of the most embarrassing photographs of you growing up as ■ kid?

Todd: I don't like where this is headed at all. [Laughter] For me, all the skate fashion in the '80s I was ■ complete victim of.

Todd Taylor: Did you have ■ Hurley (George Hurley of the Minutemen), which was the long bangs with it shaved on the side?

Todd: I had that. When I was twelve, thirteen I would wear—'cause the skate pros did this, they'd wear their T-shirts backwards, so the

Todd: Oh, it's over. You kids are done.

Jason: I had long bangs on one side and ■ cross earring.

Todd: Did you bleach your bangs? I did, too.

Jason: No, just Sun In. [Laughter] Because with black hair it turns orange.

Todd: Yeah, it was orange. [Laughter] So I looked half orangutan.

Michael: Fashion-wise, I think I still make those mistakes today with what I wear. I wear ■ leather jacket and ■ cowboy hat and look like Indiana Jones. [Laughter]

Todd: Mike's like ■ squatter who walked through a Disney gift shop. [Laughter]

Michael: When I was in high school I dressed up like ■ rude boy. I would have the button-up white shirt with the checkered tie. I had a beret that my grandpa had. [Laughter] I will never learn.

Megan: So, Todd, tell us about your experience in Catholic school.

Todd: I went from first grade to twelfth and my parents were always disappointed that they wasted that much money on private school.

Todd Taylor: What was the result they were hoping for?

Todd: I really don't know. My dad went to ■ seminary for a year and he was like, "I'm ■ chick magnet, man." [Laughter] So he got married, obviously, and had kids. But they never pushed religion on us. We went to church and stuff like that, but once we got to

Todd: The closey part. That's the sharp sharp.

Michael: You're going to get ■ boo boo.

Todd: Outside of nuns spanking me, I really don't know. I do have ■ very vivid recollection of fourth grade where every kid had to perform in front of the class with ■ lip synch song and that was definitely like, "Oh! This is awesome!"

Todd Taylor: What did you perform?

Todd: I did "Jump" from Van Halen. My dad made a little wooden guitar... I think we burned it for firewood. [Laughter] He got laid off shortly after.

Jason: But it came full circle when you got to work with Van Halen doing graphic design.

Todd: I worked at this photo lab in Hollywood and one day the manager for the band Van Halen—the newly reformed Van Halen, this is in '08—came in and was like, "Oh, um the two guys I have need to work on tour stuff with you." I was like "Okay!" and my boss comes up, [whispers] "It's David Lee Roth and Alex Van Halen." I'm like "Get the fuck out." And sure enough....

Todd Taylor: [whispers] Diamond Dave! [Laughter]

Todd: They walk in, I'm sitting with David Lee Roth and Alex, and we're going over graphics for their upcoming tour. I was elated.

Todd Taylor: Was it ■ reasonable conversation?

My girlfriend made me a Star Wars pillow. That was the only thing that got stolen out of the car, with all my Star Wars stuff.

Todd: It was. It went downhill really quick. I ended up meeting with them for six weeks. Every time I'd sit with them, they'd ask for more and more and more. They couldn't comprehend how computers work, or graphics for that matter. I'd have a two gigabyte file—'cause it's an eighty foot banner for their stage—they're like, "Okay, that doesn't work. Rotate it." I'm going, "Okay, that's going to take ■ while." [Laughter] "Not fifteen minutes." Ultimately at the end, David Lee Roth got in my face and was like, "Does your company need ■ new scanner? You guys need a new printer?"

Todd Taylor: "Can I put the cocaine in the computer for it to work faster?"

Todd: My boss was like, "He probably had some bad weed." [Laughter] I told my boss after that, "I'm never working with that guy again." But he was rad, dude.

Todd Taylor: "I can't drive fifty-five either, dude."

Todd: That was our joke. [Laughter] "Mr. Hagar, Eddie, please, you guys." No, it was ■ great experience

Todd Taylor: Did the banner get made?

Todd: Actually, they ended up using that train graphic for their album cover a couple years ago.

Todd Taylor: What was the name of the record?

Todd: "Fuck off, Todd." [Laughter] I don't remember. I don't think they even remember, but it was ■ surreal moment. I was looking for their logo on Google with the members of Van Halen. I was like, "Oh, do you have the logo?" And they're like, "No, just go on Google you can probably find it on there."

Todd Taylor: That's how I imagine successful popular musicians. "I know how to sing and or play guitar. Everything else is secondary. I don't really know how I got here. How does toilet paper really work?"

[Laughter] You know, shit like that.

Todd: "My manager usually just wraps it around my hand, I don't know...."

Todd Taylor: "I should drink water?" [Laughter]

Michael: I think at the American Music Awards, they were pushed on stage.

Todd Taylor: It's like preprogrammed segways, actually. [Laughter]

Megan: [to J] So you went to school and got a job. What did you study?

Jason: I went to medical school in Chicago. I work in the emergency room. I trained at L.A. County in East L.A.

Todd Taylor: Oh wow. Do you find that you have some flexibility with that?

Jason: Definitely. Yeah it's stacked shifts. We just got off a tour for seven days and we made it mostly work.

Megan: Do your co-workers know what you do on the side?

Jason: Kinda. Not really. If they do know, it's a novelty like, "Yeah, I was into punk! That's cool, man!" You know, in the '90s everyone was ■ punk. Then they do, "When are you playing? Let me know!"

Todd: They just keep asking and they never go. Then they profusely apologize the next day and you really don't care that they couldn't go.

Michael: I serve breakfast and lunch from seven in the morning to the afternoon. I work at a diner in a small town called Glendora. Ninety-eight percent of the people who come in there are regulars. They all know about the band. They actually come to the shows.

Todd: Two of his regulars just showed up in San Francisco.

Michael: He's a retired dentist and he lives up in San Francisco. He's seventy-seven years old. He loved it and everybody loved him around 'cause that's the kind of guy he is. A guy came up to us and was like, "Can I get ■ picture of you and him? Old people don't go to punk shows ever." [Laughter]

There are other regulars that go, "I used to play in ■ band. We always played at bars," but they played in cover bands that had three sets, so they always ask, "How long do you play? An hour and a half, two hours?" I'm like, "Thirty minutes." "Alright, cool."

Todd Taylor: "I don't understand."

Todd: "How many Bon Jovi songs you guys do?"

Michael: "Do you guys do covers or originals?" "Originals." "Oh, cool. Is my eggs benedict up yet?" [Laughter]

Megan: So do your spouses and significant others approve or support your band life?

Todd: Fortunately, yes. My new wife absolutely gets it. She is a creative. She's a writer [Laughter]. I say it like that because ■ long time ago we were talking to ■ fellow *wri-ter*.

Jason: [laughs] It just sounds so arrogant.

Todd: Just listen. I know it does. It sounds really pretentious but this is why: My wife also rode horses so she would talk to other *rid-ers*. Anyway, she is a *writ-er* but she's working on her Ph.D. in writing at UNLV. On the other end, I have no idea about any of that stuff with school so I can be in the wrong.

Todd Taylor: So this is what happens: You ask your wife a question. You listen to her answer and then you remember. [Laughter]

Todd: I have done that. [Laughter]

Jason: Once or twice.

Todd: Numerous times, but I just cannot remember. But, needless to say, my wife is very supportive.

Jason: My wife's pretty cool with it. [Laughter] With the kids, it's ■ little hard sometimes. I just got back from tour and I'm like, "Hey how's it going? Good to see you." And she's like, "Hi. I'm going to the gym. Watch the kids."

Todd: She's ■ sweetheart. Your wife is adorable.

Jason: Yeah, she's super cool. I'm very lucky.

Michael: My girlfriend is amazing. She's ■ fan more than anything. She goes to every single show, which is fantastic. She goes to other shows. We go to shows all the time, or we try to. It's hard for her when I go on tour 'cause it gets lonely sometimes. But she's a trooper about it and very supportive. She packs my clothes. 'Cause I forget.

Todd: Does she fold them, too?

Todd: We just played ■ show at the world famous Viper Room in Hollywood, Calif. My cousins went. They've never seen me perform.

Jason: They fucking partied their brains out.

Todd: They had ■ great time. My dad hasn't seen us—well ■ long time ago—but he loves hearing these stories. He was so ecstatic about seeing the record.

crowd while we were playing, so he's like, "Oh okay, this is legit."

Todd Taylor: [whispers] "They're here for the other band."

Todd: The perfect lie. [Laughter]

Jason: So I didn't invite him to any other shows after that.

Todd: As far as he's concerned, we'll play the Rose Bowl next week. "I don't need to go to



Michael: She does the roll.

Todd: Oh that's a good one. It's ■ space saver.

Michael: Actually, we have been busy lately with work and stuff—because we work at the same place—so I had to pack this last time.

Todd Taylor: What did you forget?

Michael: I forgot deodorant.

Todd: He's genuinely embarrassed.

Michael: I walked out of my apartment. I forgot my backpack, my sleeping bag, and my pillow. Literally forgot everything. The number one thing I did pack, before clothes or anything, was my Playstation Vita.

Megan: Have your parents seen you play?

Michael: My mom used to go to shows all the time and then she stopped for some reason. Anytime we have anything in the process of recording, I always show my parents. I always show them videos on YouTube. They think, "Oh you're doing something you've always wanted to do." I don't know if they're proud of it but they let me do it, with no judgment.

Jason: My parents, they're pretty cool. They've been to a show once or twice. At the Knitting Factory. It was a good show.

Todd: It was Dead To Me...

Jason: Gaslight or something. He saw that

that. It's too big."

Todd Taylor: "I saw them when they were coming up." [Laughter]

Megan: So Todd, your dad, Bill has an award-winning Ferrari. Have you driven it?

Todd: I have no interest and only because it is ■ terrifying car. I'd just mess it up. I took one ride in it and got to eighty ■ a side street, but it's a beast. You sit so low. He wins awards, like up and down the coast.

Jason: "Here's ■ good car award. It's really red."

Todd: [to Jason] Oh, my dad's going to burn you, bro.



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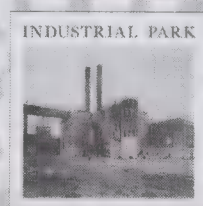
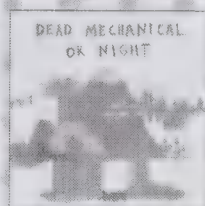
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Jason: No one said that, Mr.Smailes.

Megan: Have you ever considered doing something besides music?

Todd: Hint, hint. [Laughter] 'Cause the music's not that great. Should I look into going into another career? I think my dad always wanted me to do stand up. I cannot fake tell ■ joke for the first time. I cannot do that. Every time we play, I'll say something stupid but it's different every show.

Michael: It's just straight-up off the top of his head.

Todd: It's chaos, and again, they let me do it.

Michael: I don't know about "let."

Todd: Yeah, well they don't take the mic away from me.

Michael: I'm sitting down usually, gated in.

Jason: He's really funny. This last tour with Western Settings, I told my wife when I got back, "I don't think I've laughed as much as I did in those four or five days in a month." Just constantly between Todd and Dylan...

Todd: Don't you have ■ Han Solo something? The carbonite thing.

Michael: A bottle opener. Oh, at Disneyland I got—you can put your sandwich in Han Solo's carbonite. I thought that was pretty cool. I have ■ typewriter and Darth Vader popcorn bin with storm trooper cups.

Todd Taylor: Explain the shirt you're wearing.

Michael: My girlfriend Tiffany and I bought matching shirts. She's actually wearing this right now. It's "Lady and the Tramp" and it says "Lady and the Scoundrel."

Todd Taylor: So it's Han Solo and Princess Leia.

Jason: I didn't even get it.

Michael: Yeah, and in the spaghetti that they're sharing, it says "I love you," and dangling out of Han's mouth it says "I know." And I do have a tauntaun sleeping bag.

Todd: He did not bring it on tour.

Michael: Tiffany, she went to ■ thrift store and found it. It rolls out and the zipper is the lightsaber, so you're cutting it open.

Todd Taylor: Jason, what's the funniest thing in the emergency room?

Jason: We use ■ lot of gallows humor to get through stuff, so when I tell stories they just end up sounding really sad. Everyone's like, "Oh, that's awful!"

Todd: I laugh my ass off.

Jason: Goddammit, I've seen maggots on a brain, maggots coming out of someone's ass. I've seen like a knife in ■ lady's chest who was stabbed by her son, just gnarly shit like that.

Todd: No, not at our shows, at the hospital. [Laughter]

Jason: There's always the rectal form of body jokes. We can do all those.

Michael: A tauntaun inside of a human.

Jason: There you go. Yeah, yeah. "I was just taking a shower and I slipped and fell."

[Laughter] There's the guy who had ■ cue ball up his ass and then the surgeon's like, "Oh, I guess he was behind the eight ball on that one." The golf ball is up there. "I guess

I've seen maggots on a brain,
maggots coming out of
someone's ass. I've seen like a
knife in a lady's chest who was
stabbed by her son.

Todd: Sadly, I don't really remember any of it because it's all off the cuff. It's an art form, bro. [Laughter]

Todd Taylor: "There's ■ certain degree of magic here." [Laughter]

Todd: Magic, mathematics, science.

Michael: Even if his banter is god awful, it's still funny.

Todd: Then we'll laugh because it bombed so badly.

Michael: It's funny because everyone is just looking at him. It's not on us.

Jason: We can apply our makeup...

Michael: Just sitting there doing jazz beats and stuff... "Next song, please."

Todd Taylor: Tie a shoe. Figure out what a knob does. [Laughter]

Megan: So Mike, what is the strangest Star Wars-related item you own?

Michael: Oh boy. I have Star Wars ornaments, Yoda lights for Christmas.

[Laughter]

Todd Taylor: Are there guts inside?

Michael: There are guts inside. You're basically inside—you almost look like the tauntaun. We got it, I went home and crawled in it, and fell asleep for four hours.

[Laughter] It was really comfortable. I showed up with the tauntaun sleeping bag. I really wanted to take it on tour— but because it doesn't roll up....

Jason: Because your drums are so big already. [Laughter]

Michael: On the last tour we went, my girlfriend made me ■ Star Wars pillow. That was the only thing that got stolen out of the car, with all my Star Wars stuff.

Todd Taylor: There's a high street value on all that. [Laughter]

Michael: I just want to see that guy in Portland with ■ Star Wars laundry bag and the pillow.

he got ■ hole in one." Oh god, that goes on and on.

Todd: "That shot was a pain in the ass."

Megan: What makes Gentlemen Prefer Blood a L.A. band?

Jason: I don't think we are, necessarily. We don't wear the trappings like Dodgers hats. In my mind, I don't want to rep L.A.

Todd: If we do sound like L.A. to anybody, that's just because of the surroundings.

Michael: I live in West Hollywood, right in the middle.

Todd: Yeah, I live in the heart of Hollywood. I grew up on Beach Boys. If people can equate songs to L.A. then that's fucking rad. I don't listen to bands with geography in mind, where they're coming from or whatever. Like Face To Face. I would never have thought, "Oh they're from Victorville. I've got to go check that place out." We always say we're from L.A., I'm proud to be from L.A., but I



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think the L.A. we're from is the part that isn't really discussed.

Jason: Yeah, we grew up in the (San Fernando) valley. You can be at a strip mall anywhere, skating around.

Todd: In reality, it's just like every other starving city.

Megan: Are there any references you have hidden in your lyrics or visual artwork?

Todd: Graphics I don't want people to get. The visual thing I do, it's definitely not unique. I just try to make something look the way I want it to look. Music—I'm really glad that no one has picked up on what I think are my very obvious influences in the songs. I think a lot of my older songs sound a lot like Face To Face. No one would mention that in reviews. They'd always mention a peer band.

Todd Taylor: I think your vocals are a lot different.

Todd: Oh yeah, then that's good.

Michael: Your voice is different but the melody was there.

Jason: For me, the songs that I do bring in come from seeing my brother's bands, the hardcore '80s stuff. It made such an impression on me as a kid. I just want that, maybe with some better songwriting because, you know, the '80s....

Todd Taylor: A lot of screaming, not a lot of hooks.

Jason: Yeah, in the context of a more hooky song but still some aggression and intensity there. The rawness of that music is what I love.

Michael: For me, at least drumming-wise, is hit as hard as Dave Grohl and look as much like Animal.

Megan: Yeah you're pretty intense.

Todd: Yeah so we just rip people off.

Michael: Pretty much.

Todd Taylor: Are there any drummers in Star Wars?

Michael: There's only that one elephant-looking thing in *Return of the Jedi*. I don't know what it's called. I can never remember the names of the species.

Todd Taylor: Elephant Smurf.

Todd: A smelephant.

Michael: Yeah, but there are no drummers in Star Wars. Maybe I should hit up JJ to have me play the drums.

Todd Taylor: Make a cameo.

Michael: They'd probably get Dave Grohl instead.

Todd Taylor: He's pretty booked up.

Michael: I'm pretty sure he'd cancel whatever he's doing.

the WARRIORS



L-R: Randai Slayton, Art Foulkes, Brian and Barry Qualls. 1980

INTERVIEW with **BRIAN AND BARRY QUALLS** of the **WARRIORS**

In a tired world of screwed up, used up, and bad clichés, "Far from the madding crowd" is **that** close to describing The Warriors. Unrivaled and historical, The Warriors **East** Los Angeles' least Chicano, most important, exceedingly groundbreaking, and utmost implausible of unsung hero bands; yet their core, side, and guest members (and punk trainees) read like a biblical "who's who" list of their more famous posterities hailing from east of the bridges that separate the eastside from the rest of Los Angeles.

This is the band that defined the Eastside DIY movement, before the Vex became the flagship club of the early '80s eastside underground, by originating and introducing the now-common backyard party/concert to the confused, reluctant, and often "softly segregated" Hollywood scene of the 1970s. Imagine the likes of Love's Arthur Lee and a young Eddie Van Halen, along with four hundred people and a flock of cops, attending illegal parties that somehow always managed to avoid ending in **major** riot.

Spearheaded by brothers Brian and Barry Qualls, The Warriors busted down barriers and confounded Hollywood/Westside bookers and the underground elite's preconceptions about East L.A., then morphed into the white-hot flash—and major label A&R darlings—that **The Shades**.

They believed in the radical, social, and musical emancipation brought about by the subversive L.A. and New York underground **and** press.

Wedge in the late '70s revolution that promised to liberate the knotted down musical counterculture, The Warriors played hard and ran

fast out of the East Los barrios with their multi-racial, multiple gendered, and multi-genre band, fueled by optimism and liberation theology-style idealism before running headlong into the established industry walls that even the most avid idealists or heaviest revolutionaries couldn't avoid, or break.

But The Warriors knew it **was** a wall they could **at** least crack, and they never stopped trying. I know, because I **was** there as they kicked the daylight out of every band with which they shared the stage, **one** of which **now** live in infamy. To work with, play with, or just hang around with them **was** to attend the best rock school taught by the rules of the street—you learned to write and play everything and cook up concoctions of Ray Charles and Kraftwerk, hard hundred-year-old rancheras fueled by "Street Fighting Man"-era Stones energy, and finalized with gospel-inspired vocals. They did this **with** punk, blues, techno punk instrumentation, and multiple drummers, all on **one** stage.

Always "courted" but never recorded, The Warriors music remains **a** memory in motion, but theirs was the kind of music that **would** today would make you roll down your window to get a better listen from out of the **car** next to you as you breeze down Whittier Blvd.

Far from the madding crowd they remain, the best band you'll likely **never** hear, and we're all the worse for it.

INTERVIEW **by** Jimmy Alvarado

INTRODUCTION **by** Jesus Velo

TRANSCRIPTION **by** Jimmy Alvarado and Madeline Bridenbaugh

PHOTOS **by** Rachel Murray Framingheddu and Jimmy Alvarado

UNCREDITED PHOTOS COURTESY OF Brian and Barry Qualls

LAYOUT **by** Eric Baskauskas

PUNK NEEDED TO HAPPEN.

PUNK NEEDS TO CONTINUE TO EVOLVE AS WELL.

Brian: My name is Brian Qualls. I was the lead guitarist/vocalist for The Warriors and The Shades. I was a part of the early punk explosion of the late '70s with the emergence of East L.A. bands.

Barry: And I am Barry Qualls. I have been in a few bands with my brother. In the mid-'70s, we got together, then in the late '70s punk came around. I was glad to be a part of the whole East L.A. scene in The Warriors, The Shades, and Odd Squad. I was blessed to be a part of Odd Squad.

Jimmy: So, let's start with where you guys were born and raised, family background, that type of thing.

Barry: I was born in General Hospital, Boyle Heights/Lincoln Heights.

Brian: I was born in Santa Monica. My family obviously is from East L.A., but my mom was living in Santa Monica. That's where my dad was from, and that's where they were living when I was born.

Jimmy: So you were raised in Boyle Heights essentially?

Brian: Yeah, all our lives. Barry spent some time in Santa Monica.

Barry: Up until I was ten years old. Our grandfather—my mom's dad—passed, and my mom came to take care of my grandmother. I was ten, Brian was about four. And we came to stay in Boyle Heights.

Jimmy: Was your family from there before?

Barry and Brian: Yeah.

Barry: Matter of fact, my great-grandparents came out at the end of the 1800s, early 1900s. Been there ever since. My dad's part of the family lived in Obregon Park, down in Belvedere (East Los Angeles neighborhoods just east of Boyle Heights), and that's where our grandmother on my dad's side—my dad's mom's—family lived. And that was from the early '20s.

Brian: My cousin's family, the Slaytons, lived right there, by Obregon Park.

Jimmy: Over by Sunol Drive?

Brian: Yeah, that's where they grew up. They went to Garfield High School. They were Garfield all-city football stars.

Barry: Track stars; still got records on the books.

Brian: Our dad's cousin Bill Slayton was very respected in that neighborhood. His son Randal Slayton is our cousin and played bass and was a vocalist for the Warriors.

Jimmy: So the ties go pretty far back, then. My dad grew up in Boyle Heights, too. He grew up around Michigan Avenue and Mott Street. He would talk about—and there's been books about—the diversity of the neighborhood very early on.

Brian: Yeah, our family owned property on Michigan. So, if your family went back into the '40s, there's no telling that they could've known the ■■■■ people back in those days, 'cause our family was very much a part of the community. My grandmother was a pretty tough old chick, you know what I mean? [Jimmy laughs.] She was a church lady, but she was also very smart. She was more educated than the men of her generation were. But living right there that whole time and having that experience in that community—my grandfather drove bricks for the Maravilla Brickyard, even before it was the Maravilla Brickyard...

Barry: Great-grandfather.

Brian: Great-grandfather. Well, but poppy ended up working for 'em too, right?

Barry: Matter of fact, to let you know, I always thought we had a great-grandmother buried at Evergreen Cemetery (the local cemetery, also one of the oldest cemeteries in Los Angeles), and I found out that even her mother was buried there. So, great-great-grandmother buried in Evergreen, great-grandmother, two great-grandfathers, mother, uncles, aunts, cousins....

Brian: One was a slave, right?

Barry: Yeah.

Jimmy: And if I remember right—that area right there down off of Michigan, right by the cemetery—that used to be one of the first Black neighborhoods in Los Angeles.

Brian: Absolutely. There were a lot of Black families there in Boyle Heights, right around all the way up to City Terrace, where my cousins grew up, ■■■ top of the hill, up on Dodds Circle, so all the way down. People forget. When I went to Belvedere Junior High School, it was largely Mexican, but all the brothers from my neighborhood went to Belvedere, too, so there were a lot of us. We were just a holdover from that generation that had been going ■■■ all that time, so we never felt like, "We don't belong in the neighborhood," or anything like that. Everybody—we had so many ties with all our Mexican friends.

Barry: Our great-grandfather started the church. It celebrated 111 years a couple of years ago. That's how long it's been around. His church, Mount Carmel Missionary Baptist Church, is still there today.

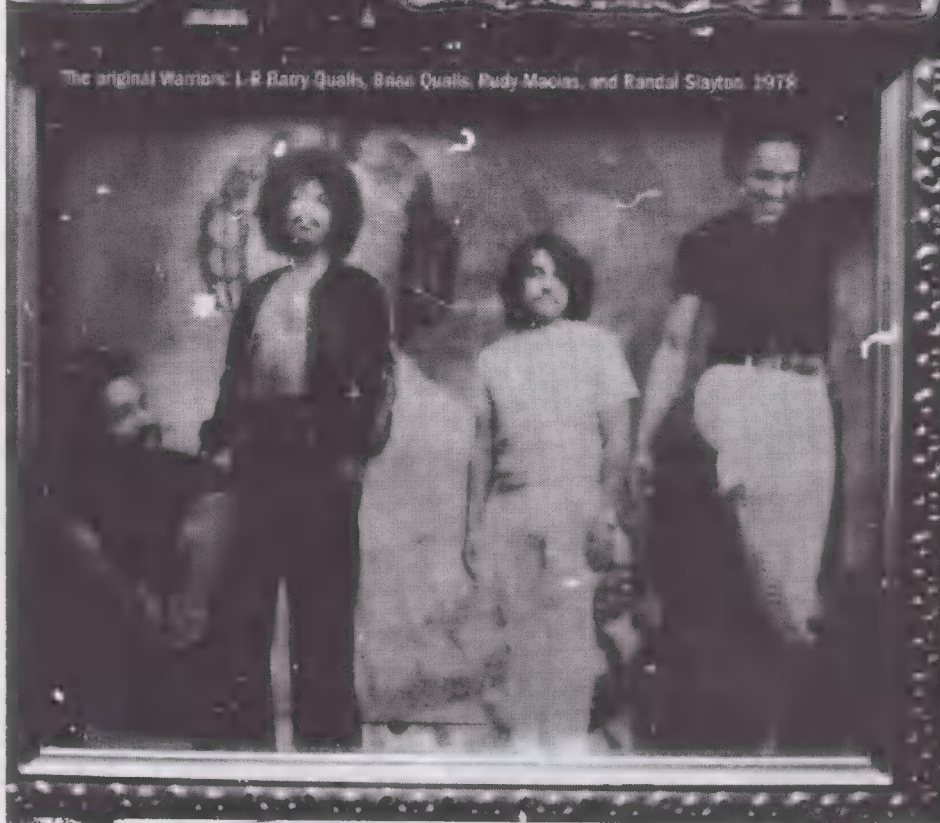
Brian: We were both ministers there. I was an assistant pastor there for years.

Jimmy: Oh, wow, okay. My father used to talk about when he was growing up—Chicano guy from Boyle Heights. He went to school with Russian Molokans, the Japanese





Brian Quinn and the Qualls, L.A. Amigos, Rudy Macias, Barry Qualls, and Randal Slayton circa 1975



The original Warriors: L.P. Barry Qualls, Brian Qualls, Rudy Macias, and Randal Slayton, 1975

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kids. He remembered when he was growing up, the Japanese kids, when they were there one day and the next day they were gone. (Following the 1941 attack on Pearl Harbor, President Roosevelt signed Executive Order 9066, which ultimately led to hundreds of thousands of Americans of Japanese ancestry living on the West Coast, including those living in East L.A., being interned in concentration camps from 1942-1946.)

Brian: Yeah, it messed with my mother tremendously. She graduated from Roosevelt High School in '44. She used to tell me that she always felt blessed growing up in Boyle Heights because it was the most diversified community in the whole state. And she told me that at Roosevelt, when she was there, were forty-one different ethnic groups of people going to school there together with no problem. I just don't understand why we don't see that more now today, you know?

Jimmy: Right, and it's interesting that the view of Boyle Heights and City Terrace—and East Los Angeles in general—is this view that it's been predominantly Mexican. And even when I was growing up, it wasn't that way. We had Black kids there. We had Chinese kids. We had Japanese friends...

Brian: Absolutely.

Jimmy: ...and we all went to school together, and it was, like... everybody—Chinese kids, I mean, Japanese kids—talked with that East L.A. accent, you know? [laughs]

Brian: Yeah, man, of course! [laughs] C'mon, the prevailing accent's going to win. Everybody used to say I sounded like Cheech or Tommy Chong.

Jimmy: Right, right.

Brian: Hey man, I was right there from that neighborhood. [laughing] Who else am I gonna sound like?

Jimmy: But that misconception has always been that it's predominantly Mexican—and there is some truth in the fact that there is a majority of Mexicans or Latinos who are there—but it was also a lot more diverse than they try to paint it.

Brian: Well, even in East L.A. there were Black people there. That's true, but it was nowhere near where there was a whole community. On my block, when I first—I tripped out 'cause when I was a kid I thought about all the Black families on my block alone. And then the block behind me, all the Black families. And then the block ahead, and all around. And I go, "Gee..." I got up to about a hundred different homes that had Blacks in that area. That's a lot of people.

Barry: And that was in the '60s. All the Black people were leaving.

Brian: Yeah, and that was in the '60s. It was even more like that in the '50s and in the '40s, you know? And people don't know that.

Jimmy: They're just finding out about the Jewish history that was there from the '20s and the '10s and the '30s.

Brian: My mom said she used to go to Canter's (famous delicatessen originally located in Boyle Heights, now in the Fairfax District on Los Angeles's Westside) with a nickel and get sandwiches or something,

right there on Brooklyn Avenue, (now Cesar Chavez Avenue), you know?

Barry: Yeah, my mom had a really tough Jewish accent. She could.... [Brian and Jimmy laugh] If you heard her talking, you would think she....

Brian: She knew all the kids, you know what I mean?

Barry: She was pretty bad. [Jimmy laughs]
Brian: My mom used to joke because... growing up Black, you're gonna hear the "N-word." Someone is going to say "nigger," okay? You're gonna hear that. But my mom used to laugh because she could say "nigger" in I don't know how many different languages, man. [Jimmy laughs.] She said at some point one of her friends had called her that, then realized the significance of what it was, and they were just, like, "Uh-oh." You know? [laughs] She didn't take offense to anybody over that, just like I didn't when I was growing up in East L.A. Some of my friends used to say the "N-word" to me just to start ■ fight. [laughs] But those guys are some of my best friends, you know? I know they love me just like I love them.

Jimmy: And it's just kind of the shit you went through when you were living in the 'hood.

Brian: That's it! And I would expect those kinds of things to happen, but there's always been, with me, ■ very good harmony of growing up in ■ Latin community, especially in ■ Mexican community. I married a Mexican girl. [Everyone laughs.]

Barry: When I was at Belvedere, ■ good homeboy of mine in my homeroom.... "Mayate!" (Spanish ■ word meaning "beetle," used as a derogatory term for African American) [Everyone laughs.] I liked the way it sounded. "Mayate!" I hollered back at him, right? So one day one of my other homies said, "Hey man, you know what he's doing? You know what he's saying?" [Everyone laughs.] I said, "Yeah, 'mayate.' It sounds cool to me. I like the way it sounds." He goes, "No, man, he's poking fun." I found out what was up, and usually I'd be fighting for all that kind of stuff, but I kinda liked Gilly. Then I let him know what was up. He stopped calling me that. As years rolled by and everything, I shortened it to "Yate" some years back with one of our cousins, probably Randal.

Brian: Yeah, we'd call each other "Yate."

Barry: And he (Brian) was "mulatto," light-skinned, wondering if he was Puerto Rican. [Everyone laughs.] They used to call him "Latto" for short, for "mulatto," and mine was "Yate," from "mayate." So I'm "El Yate" to a whole lot of folks, you know that? [Everyone laughs.] That's from Gilbert Perez, god bless him. He came to my sixty-third birthday party. Yeah, good guy.

Jimmy: Yeah, so you took what would've been a pejorative term and turned it into....

Brian: Yeah, absolutely, a term of endearment 'cause that's, basically, what that word has become. I know that there have been many who have been really put off by the "N-word" and think it should go away forever, and that's possible, too.

I can understand that and I can appreciate it. Anything that you use to try to invoke ■ negative racial thing to somebody. Maybe it needs to go away, but all the time—trying to get upset and go off every time you hear it—that ends up being a waste of time. It would be different if every time I heard it somebody was snarling in my face wanting to hit me. But that's a whole different thing.

Jimmy: Right.

Brian: So, growing up in the 'hood, if I ever heard any kind of derogatory things I never let it be, like, "Eh," you know? We used to call Mexicans "eses." It used to be "bloods and eses."

Jimmy: And then the minute you let them know it bothers you....

Brian: Oh yeah. See, that's the thing. I got friends today. Both of my compadres, they would go off on anybody else because they have been so close to me. They would not tolerate anybody talking to me in that kind of disrespectful ■■■■■ and I love them for it. I tell 'em, "You guys ain't even gotta worry about it. I'm not sweatin' it, so why should you?"

Jimmy: You grew up in the '60s in East L.A., right? So you guys witnessed when things got ■ lot more politicized in the neighborhoods?

Brian: Absolutely.

Barry: I'm six-and-a-half years older than him, ■ when I was going to Belvedere I was the only Black guy in my class. There were two Black girls. Little bit different in the neighborhood. There were a lot more younger guys in the neighborhood when he started going there. But I went to ■ Battle of the Bands when I was at Belvedere at East L.A. College. That's the first time I heard live music from East L.A.—and was kind of like listening and looking—and right across the street come the Magaña family. Mr. Magaña played the acoustic guitar, Mexican songs. His son's learning guitar; started teaching ■ chords and stuff.

Brian: Yeah, teaching us how to play Beatles songs.

Jimmy: Okay, so that's how you got into music.

Brian: Yeah, absolutely.

Barry: Well, our mother was a great singer. I seen her on TV when I was a kid.

Brian: Yeah, my mom could write music.

Barry: My brother just played for ■■ the song my mother wrote. She got an "A" for it when she was at Roosevelt. My uncle—her oldest brother—was a lyricist, and he wanted to be a guitar-playing Elvis way before his time. [Everyone laughs.] He was good.

Brian: I remember it, just note-for-note.

Barry: That's where the music came from, just a love of music. But what really happened was The Beatles and acoustic guitar.

Jimmy: That just opened up your world musically.

Barry: Yeah, I had an acoustic guitar and I gave it to Brian. He was eight. I was going to Roosevelt and was going to be a football star like my cousins and my uncles. Make some money playing football, you know? I didn't know it hurt like it did, though, 'cause I hadn't played tackle yet. [Everyone laughs.] I gave my guitar to Brian and by the time I graduated Roosevelt, he goes, "Barry, Barry, listen." He starts playing "Light My Fire" by the Doors, and I said, "Whoa...." And I says, "Yeah, I did the right thing by letting this guy take the guitar," because it wasn't like he just took it and gave it up. I always knew music was in him.

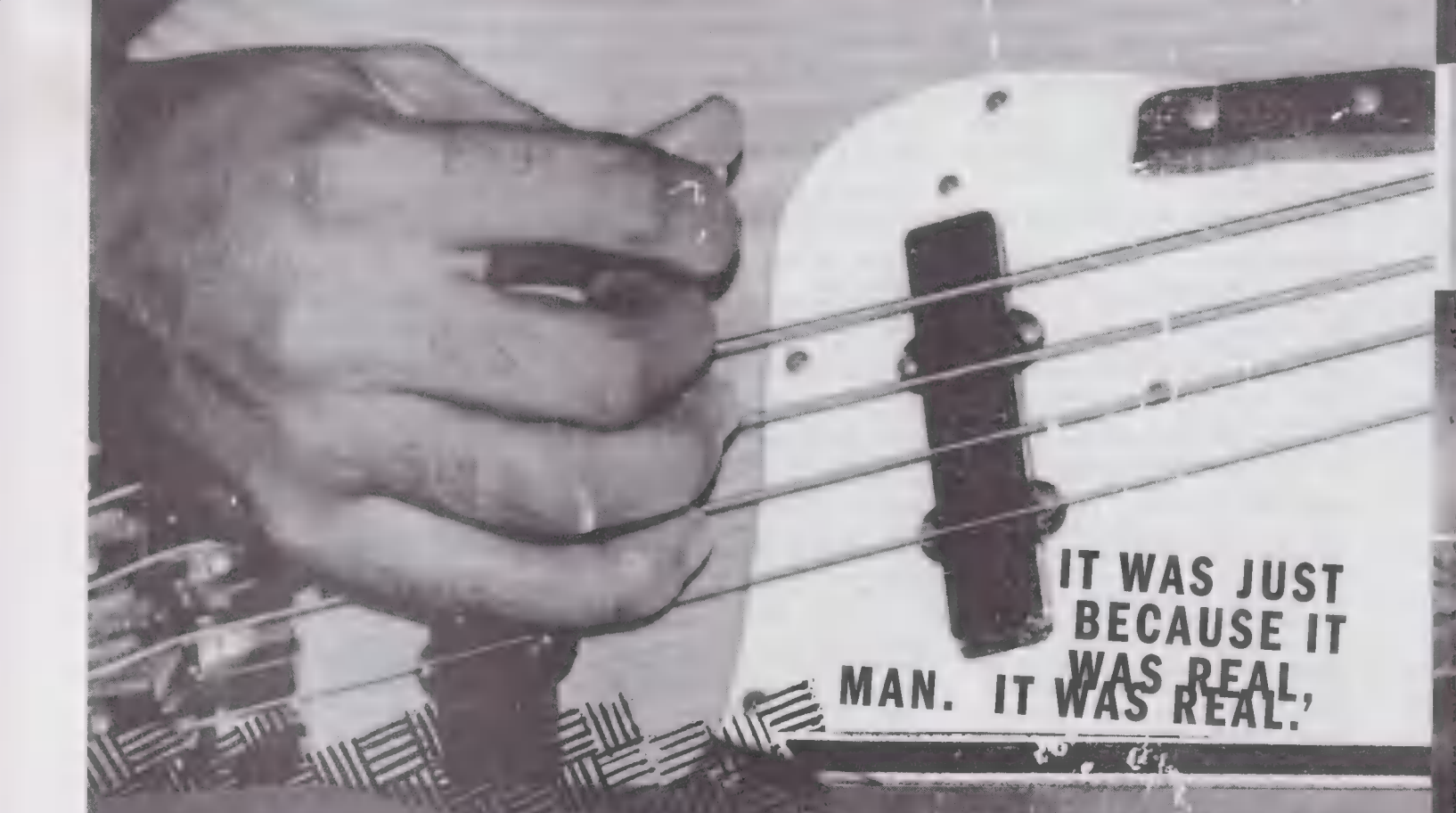
Brian: My mother could play piano and sing, and there would be jam sessions sometimes. Her friends would come over and she always had a tape recorder. Nobody had a big, kick-ass tape recorder like we did. We always had one, and my mom used to sing and record people and everything. She was so much into music and was heartbroken that she didn't get to pursue it.

So with me—after Barry got married and moved off—she was, like, "Honey, if you want to do music, you go for it. Don't worry about nothing. You can just do what you gotta do. It takes practice, I know, ■ just go for it." And she supported me. She did ■ lot of that as I was growing up. Even when I was very little she always encouraged that. She didn't want to be like her mother had been with her, not letting her do music.

And since I heard Ray Charles, man—I used to cry because some killer Ray Charles track would be playing on our big stereo with bass kicking—and I couldn't even sleep. But my mom would be in a mood. She'd be ironing and singing and listening

WE'RE NOT GIBBY, MAN, BUT

WE SURVIVED.



**IT WAS JUST
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**AND WE JUST
RIPPED.**

to Ray Charles. That was just burned into me somehow. Even though it made me cry ■ ■ kid, ■ I got older I realized Ray Charles is happenin', you know?

Barry: There was the *Mickey Mouse Club* show. Brian's a little guy, I mean he's little. One, two years old. And they'd sing the song at the end, "M-I-C, see you real soon..." [Brian and Jimmy laugh.] And he would start to cry, 'cause it was so sad to him. All of my cousins and the older people, they would come around when this was over to watch him cry because the song really got to him. [Jimmy laughs.] It was just his love for music, you know?

Jimmy: So, if you guys could describe the music scene in East L.A. in the '70s—if there was a viable scene, and if there was any defining sound that was prevalent, that was all over the place.

Brian: Well, most of us who ended up playing in the punk circuit—there were a lot of other musicians who were playing when we were playing. In the '60s it was always like you played soul first, then you evolved into the British thing, then you played rock'n'roll. But in the '70s it became heavy rock bands; a lot of good musicians from East L.A., great singers, great guitar players. There were a lot of good bands that played ■ circuit, where the backyard party was the thing that started.

I remember playing in ■ band called TBR with original Warrior drummer Rudy Macias. We'd call each other on a Friday night: "You guys wanna play?" "Yeah, let's play." We'd call and let our friends know, and we'd show up and there'd be three hundred people in ■ yard rockin' out. In those days you could play ■ hour, hour-and-a-half before the cops got there. It was, really cool. We did a lot of that stuff, and then every now and then some promoter would book something. But all of those guys who played that circuit ended up later on—all of us who cut our teeth on that early heavy rock, and Hendrix and Deep Purple....

But all those guys who did that—I know Jesse Velo did, I'm sure Bill Reyes (bassist and drummer, respectively, of Los Illegals) did—we all played in those kind of bands and then everything started changing. People started going, "Wait a minute. There's this new thing going on and we want to be ■ part of it." We started hearing—instead of the same old kind of rock'n'roll bands, once we started getting away from that—started listening to more people like Patti Smith and the Ramones. But to me it wasn't even punk. At early stages, the bands that I saw there, they were just a different artistic evolving of rock'n'roll. And that's all it is anyway.

Jimmy: It's interesting that you say that you guys played backyard parties. Was that something that was happening even before you?

Brian: I don't know anybody who played backyard parties until my little clique or generation, within about a four or five year period ahead or behind. When I was doing it, it totally happened by us having parties on our block. We and the Calhouns—who were like cousins to us growing up—their mom and

my mom were best friends. They always were like cousins to us. We used to have parties. We had people like Arthur Lee from Love show up at those parties. We had all kinds of people at those parties. People talk about having four hundred people in a backyard, walking out, going, "Wow, that was a good show." And it was just because it was real, man. It was real. We set up our amps, put up a little bit of lighting over us, and we just *ripped*. That's the way all of us did it.

Jimmy: And what time period was this?

Brian: I would say '72 to '77. That's when you start being able to go to clubs, when punk started happening. Even though we were more of ■ rock'n'roll band, and we had an association with that scene so much. I think being Black and having ■ Chicano in the band made it look like this was just ■ different type of punk to them because it was so different. You never saw that, playing that kind of music. Our music started changing. We started getting more into the scene.

The only problem was a lot of the bands that started coming up, that really started having strongholds in punk—I had been playing for years already. I couldn't unlearn what I did, to minimize. That's basically—let's face it—that's the ~~essence~~ of punk. That's what makes it beautiful, that's what makes it rock. I mean, the Ramones, period, man. That's an analogy on how to make ■ song just rock, just make you think, make you feel it, just *bang*. It has every element in it.

Jimmy: Strip it to its essence, yeah.

Brian: That's exactly right. So I really watched how music started changing and by the time we had left the Warriors and the new Warriors, where we were playing the Hong Kong Café, we were getting the neighborhood bands to play there. I think we got The Brat to come play with us.

Barry: They opened up for us.

Brian: They were thrilled about that. Me and John Doe (vocalist/bassist for X) got drunk at the bar and insulted each other that night. It was fun but he was ■ gentleman and we had a good time. And I stuck up for what I liked musically. He stuck up for what he liked, but he kept buying ■ tequila. "Man, come on Brian. Let's go for another one." We had ■ great time that night. That was ■ good night for The Brat. I think it was like ■ coming out party for them. They played really good.

Barry: One of the things I liked about that scene was—well, I knew chords—I started writing tunes musically. I was writing lyrics and I would give them to my brother. That's how we always worked: I would write lyrics and he would have ■ tune he didn't have lyrics for. When the punk scene came on, it inspired me to start writing songs musically, too. It was pretty easy, I had fun doing it. [laughs]

Brian: Yeah, man. There ■ a lot of musicians who would have said—I got friends my age saying—"You should've been playing jazz all that time, not wasting your time doing that crap." But I've always tended to lean to the cool side of things. I love jazz, but I was like, "Man, that's a lot of work."

Barry: No words, either.

Brian: I do it now. I listen to jazz. I play jazz. But just the fact that you know when you downsize your sound a little bit and you just make things really basic—it was good for ■ to do that. We learned how to minimize and let the music make the person. One thing I'll say that Hilburn (Robert Hilburn, Los Angeles Times critic and music editor, 1970-2005) said that I totally agree on is that there are two types of music. There is passive and there is active music. Passive music doesn't require thought. It entertains you, you listen to it, it's laid out nice and easy. Chord changes ■ always sweet. You can digest it really easy. Then there is active music that pushes nerves, makes you go, "Wait ■ minute, you're hitting ■ nerve here and I don't like that...but I do like it because I experience this." So that's what I was really starting to ■ in what they call "alternative" to this day.

Punk needed to happen. Punk needs to continue to evolve as well, because all genres or music—or whatever you call it, culture, whatever—rock'n'roll accepts all contributions for the greater good. Let's face it. Punk rock is its own thing just like any other type of genre is its own thing, but it's all ■ part of the ■ thing and that's American music, more than anything else. At least, that's the music that we are making because we're Americans.

Barry: Me and my brother were rehearsing in Covina. He would come by and pick me up right there in Boyle Heights. We drove by the old Paramount Ballroom where the original Vex was at. There was ■ studio. On the way back from practice we stopped in and pulled in the alley. We go in and I see this guy walking. I say, "Your ■ Tito?" and he goes "Yeah."

It was Tito Larriva from The Plugz. I knew who he ■ because I had read in one of these *Times* things about the punk rock scene in East L.A. Just, "Whoa, they say something about us in here, cool. I'll check this out." And I ask Brian, "Hey man, you hear of this guy Tito?" And I ask Sy, Thunder, Tim. I was asking guys in The Brat—they knew who he was, but I didn't know at the time that he was this guy from El Paso who was in The Plugz, who were right there in the East L.A. scene.

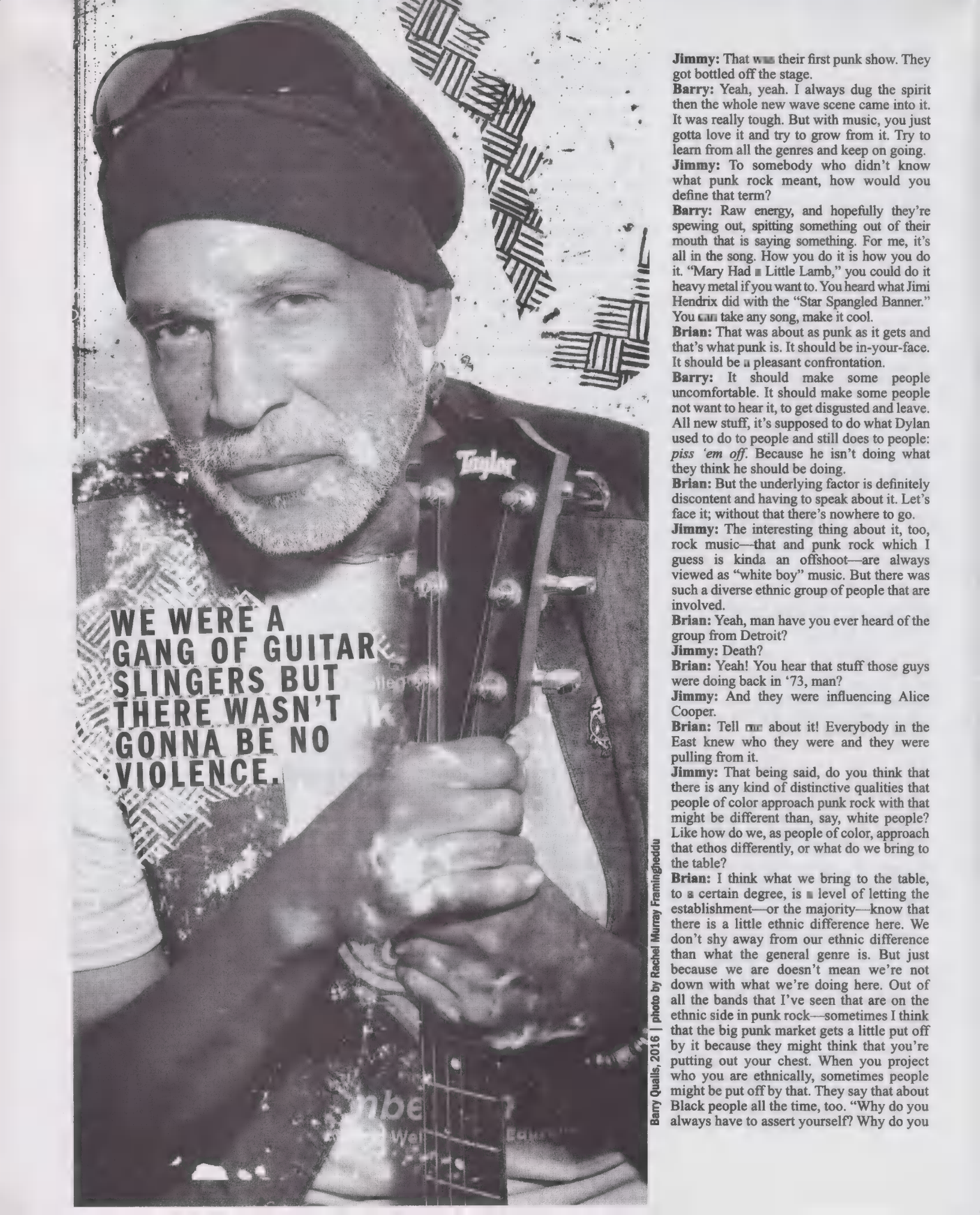
So I go introduce him to the band. He goes and starts asking The Brat and Odd Squad—"Hey, these guys that I met, who are they?" "Oh that's Barry and Brian Qualls from the Warriors and Shades." So Tito Larriva takes ■ into the studio.

Brian: Yeah, yeah.

Barry: My brother played on ■ of his albums.

Brian: I played on *Better Luck* (The second Plugz album). "In the Wait."

Barry: I went down to Olympic Auditorium. They used to have good psychedelic rock shows there. They had this show—Sex Pistols broke up so Johnny had Public Image Limited and they were headlining. The Plugz were on the second bill and Los Lobos opened up.



WE WERE A
GANG OF GUITAR
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Jimmy: That was their first punk show. They got bottled off the stage.

Barry: Yeah, yeah. I always dug the spirit then the whole new wave scene came into it. It was really tough. But with music, you just gotta love it and try to grow from it. Try to learn from all the genres and keep on going.

Jimmy: To somebody who didn't know what punk rock meant, how would you define that term?

Barry: Raw energy, and hopefully they're spewing out, spitting something out of their mouth that is saying something. For me, it's all in the song. How you do it is how you do it. "Mary Had a Little Lamb," you could do it heavy metal if you want to. You heard what Jimi Hendrix did with the "Star Spangled Banner." You can take any song, make it cool.

Brian: That was about as punk as it gets and that's what punk is. It should be in-your-face. It should be a pleasant confrontation.

Barry: It should make some people uncomfortable. It should make some people not want to hear it, to get disgusted and leave. All new stuff, it's supposed to do what Dylan used to do to people and still does to people: piss 'em off. Because he isn't doing what they think he should be doing.

Brian: But the underlying factor is definitely discontent and having to speak about it. Let's face it; without that there's nowhere to go.

Jimmy: The interesting thing about it, too, rock music—that and punk rock which I guess is kinda an offshoot—are always viewed as "white boy" music. But there was such a diverse ethnic group of people that are involved.

Brian: Yeah, man have you ever heard of the group from Detroit?

Jimmy: Death?

Brian: Yeah! You hear that stuff those guys were doing back in '73, man?

Jimmy: And they were influencing Alice Cooper.

Brian: Tell me about it! Everybody in the East knew who they were and they were pulling from it.

Jimmy: That being said, do you think that there is any kind of distinctive qualities that people of color approach punk rock with that might be different than, say, white people? Like how do we, as people of color, approach that ethos differently, or what do we bring to the table?

Brian: I think what we bring to the table, to a certain degree, is a level of letting the establishment—or the majority—know that there is a little ethnic difference here. We don't shy away from our ethnic difference than what the general genre is. But just because we are doesn't mean we're not down with what we're doing here. Out of all the bands that I've seen that are on the ethnic side in punk rock—sometimes I think that the big punk market gets a little put off by it because they might think that you're putting out your chest. When you project who you are ethnically, sometimes people might be put off by that. They say that about Black people all the time, too. "Why do you always have to assert yourself? Why do you

always have to make that such a big part of who you are?"

Jimmy: "Why do you have to ~~sum~~ I am asserting myself?"

Brian: That's exactly right. All you're doing is just basically stating the facts, you're laying them out there—"This is who I am, this is where I come from." That's what it should be with anybody: where they're from. And once you're at that point with someone—at the beginning—then you judge from there. Who they are, what they're doing, how valuable their message is, and everything else.

Jimmy: It was always interesting, too, they would lump The Brat or even The Undertakers ~~as~~ East L.A. bands, Mexican bands, but they didn't sing about that.

Brian: Not at all.

Jimmy: Los Illegals were the only ones who did that, who put it at the front.

Brian: Absolutely, absolutely. And The Illegals—you couldn't not ~~see~~ it. It was written over everything that they did. There is a political power behind what they're talking about. I used to listen to those songs and go, "All right guys, I have been in East L.A. all my life. I don't need to keep hearing about La Raza all night and day. It ain't all about you, okay?" But hey, they need to say it, right? And I thought it was powerful. But the whole time I thought it was powerful, I was like, "Man, Willie's got a lot of guts." Because there's a lot of people out there who don't like you coming out and just throwing it in their face. Those lyrics were pretty hard on that album, but there was nothing untrue about it.

Jimmy: So how did you guys stumble on the East L.A. punk scene? Was there ~~some~~ prior to the Vex that would have been considered East L.A. punk?

Barry: You take Angela Vogel from Odd Squad—Art Reyes (vocalist for Thee Undertakers) when he was in Malabar Elementary School; I'm in high school, right? The Brat, I used to see them going to junior high school. So it's like we were there at the beginning. Manuel and Tony Valdez from Los Illegals both played with us before all this. So all of them who jumped from East Los at that time who were in the scene we were talking about earlier—they all went over and called themselves punk now. Same group of people. Like when we meet Tito Larriba and he wants to produce us, we're right there on the scene.

Jimmy: And this is with The Warriors, right?

Barry: This was with The Shades. We cut our hair and tried to give the best punk show we could get.

Brian: The Warriors played some punk shows. We became the new Warriors. We got a white drummer from Whittier to play with us. We became a very aggressive.... It was punk, but it was just a little bit more riff oriented. I didn't run from the riffs. All my punk friends were like, "You gotta keep playing. Don't hold back." Tito told me at first, "You need keep doing that because sooner or later, even punk is gonna step out and want guitarists that rip. So keep on

playing, don't unlearn it." And so working with him—all of those people—that's how we fell right into the East L.A. punk bands: The Brat, Los Illegals, Thee Undertakers, the Odd Squad.

Barry: But we were digging all the bands anyway, all the new stuff that came out. We were listening to the Ramones and The Clash. We loved that music just as much as the hardcore punk folks.

Jimmy: So there was a group of kids and bands that was gelling. Was there any point that you guys realized that you were part of something bigger, something more going on than just friends?

Brian: We watched a lot of different groups come out of that whole thing even though there was a long period of time where that whole community gelled together, played the ~~same~~ clubs. Every now and then those bands would get together and play a special show; there were a lot of people. For me, for a little while there, I was a little hurt because I felt like I wasn't getting to be a part of the thing that was goin' on because I wasn't Chicano.

But then again, I've been here all my life. I'm probably as much Chicano as some of these other cats. So I just felt a little... you know. Whenever the press came around, we were always excluded as a Black band and that was the thing. I don't think it was really about race, just because you state who you are, just because you have a thing. I know the guys in Illegals, no matter how political their message is—I know they don't hate me, I know they don't hate Blacks—they're my brothers, know what I mean?

Jimmy: As a scene you were included, but when it ~~came~~ to people outside the scene and their interpretation of the scene, that's when you started to get excluded.

Brian: Absolutely, absolutely. There was a while back, Willie Herrón (Los Illegals vocalist and co-founder of the Vex) and some of the people from the early Vex wanted to have a documentary or document all the bands who played at the early Vex. Back in the day, the Warriors always had to play last. Nobody wanted to play after us. We were not the hippest of all these guys. We didn't give a shit about being too hip or anything else. We were playing hard. "The Warriors just blew our face off," and that's when we really played our first gigs with early Illegals, Undertakers at the Vex. And they had this celebration. They made us close, but what was really cool was Willie got up, "Oh let me sing with you, bro." Then Anthony got up, "I wanna play, too." All the guys started getting up there, I think Tony Valdez, him and Mimi (Manuel Valdez). It was a pretty crazy night. The Los Lobos' kids played and they were great. I was cracking up, like "These kids are crazy," but they were really, really good.

Jimmy: Those kids, David and Louie from Los Lobos' sons, they had a band called Los Villains and a band called The Drips. They've actually become pretty popular in Orange County. The Drips are awesome.

Brian: I heard David's son did some work with Social Distortion.

Jimmy: He might have.

Barry: And Mariachi El Bronx.

Jimmy: Yeah that too. I don't know a lot about the bands you guys were in. Were the Shades the first band?

Brian: The Shades wasn't the earliest. The Warriors is the band that evolved out of the '70s and morphed into the whole punk thing. The Warriors was first. That was me and my brother, my cousin Randall Slayton, and Rudy Macias. Macias and I played in a band called TBR, a popular backyard band. We could make money every weekend just charging fifty cents. The Warriors was the first band that really went to the west side. Jesse Velo attributed that to us—"You guys going out to the west side and playing with these bands at all these different clubs, that opened the door for us." I didn't really think about it that way, but we were around playing that stuff. We used to play the west side clubs a lot in the Warriors with all the bands playing that were the punk, early new wave bands, like The Motels.

Jimmy: Where did the name come from?

Barry: The Warriors was just a name I came up with. They used to have psychedelic posters, black light posters of The Warriors. They were this Black guy, this black-haired white guy, blonde white guy. And they'd be psychedelic posters. Different posters would have them with their women. They were from the future but it looked like they were from the past. I liked that. And when you see the whole group of the Warriors—the Black one, the white one, the brown one—I like that concept. You see them there and you didn't know where they were coming from but they all looked cool and their old ladies were cool. I felt that way about us, and I told my brother, "Hey, the Warriors." Then they made this movie (*The Warriors*), Esther Wong wouldn't let us come play at Madame Wong's because a fight broke out in Hollywood during this movie and she was thinking we were a gang. I mean, we were a gang of guitar slingers but there wasn't gonna be no violence. She let us play when we changed our name to The Shades.

Brian: It was a drag because it wasn't like there was anything violent about it. It was just this imagery—we grew up in a real rough neighborhood. There were some bad cats in our neighborhood, man. And you know what? We got through that neighborhood with a lot of respect from all of those guys. We were never afraid of throwin' down if we had to. You never wanted to let our guard down in that neighborhood. When you grow up with guys—some of 'em would go to the Marines and come back crazy, man, like guys on steroids, wanting to beat up their childhood friend when they had a few beers—a lot of that where we were growing up. And we're not cocky, man, but we're confident. We grew up in the Heights, man. We survived. So that's what The Warriors were. When we'd go on stage, it was funny. We would play with these bands: "Well, I hope these fellas got big feet because after we blow the holes all through stage, they might fall in it." We'd be laughin'. "We're gonna stomp mudholes on you guys!"

Barry: We were from East Los, you know? We were proud of where we ■■■■ from.

Brian: And our crowd was crazy, too. The Warriors had ■ crazy crowd that was all from the 'hood, from Boyle Heights. And they would show up and buy more alcohol than anybody. Boy, George Wong loved us. On ■ Tuesday night we could pack that place with people who were gonna buy a lot of beer.

Jimmy: What were you guys drawing musical influence from that influenced you or your sound?

Brian: Pretty much anything being played at the time.

Barry: All the rock'n'roll stuff, all the soul stuff, all the funk stuff. Psychedelic stuff.

Brian: The thing about it was—since we were so accepting of punk—to us to be really good in any genre is to be able to be proficient in ■ lot of different things. Take ■ band like Sublime, right? That's ■ punk band if you ask me. To me, that's what they were but they didn't sound like your average punk band. They sounded completely different than what a lot of people would consider punk. There are ■ lot of punk bands that have that groove, that ■■ very syncopated, very melodic, but that band right there.... That's the problem with music. Trying to figure how to correctly word something to articulate how close you wanna get ■ that someone understands. It gets really hard sometimes. I ■■ just not young enough to have my brain work like that anymore.

Jimmy: You ■■ also talking about a style of music, especially early on, because... The Brat didn't sound like The Illegals. It was more about ■■ aesthetic than it was about ■ sound and that sound got commodified. When you talk about sounding punk—Patti Smith, they called her the "queen of punk." She didn't sound anything like the Ramones. So it is ■ bit ■■■■ difficult to try to qualify that kind of definition of it.

Brian: I think when new people started calling it "hardcore punk," stuff like that—before that, I don't remember much of distinction between ■ lot of what was considered punk.

Jimmy: The problem with music is also, from what I ■■ tell, it's ■ distinctly male trait. Every time you come up with something, some asshole is going to try to make these narrower and narrower definitions.

Brian: Yeah, yeah. "Oh I'm not into it, because it doesn't fill this description."

Jimmy: Yeah. It's not what you say it is because it doesn't fit this description. "The drumbeat has ■ third shaved off the hi-hat," or something stupid like that.

I found this on the internet and I thought you might find it interesting. It was the only thing I could find that is a description of The Warriors. It's from ■ post on a page called VintageAmps.com and it was posted by someone called Alvin. It says: "It was Barry, Rudy Macias on drums and Brian Qualls on guitar and their cousin whose name I don't remember on bass. They used to do a smokin' version of 'Ain't Talkin' Bout Love' for their encores. At the time, Brian used to work with my brother at the printing company in

East L.A. Warriors are the ones who turned us on to Top Jimmy & The Rhythm Pigs. I became a friend of Carlos Guitarlos. I'm glad to hear someone else say that The Warriors were indeed rockin' and it wasn't just the memories of a wide-eyed sixteen-year-old wannabe from 1979. I am going to try to track down Brian to thank him for twenty-five years of inspiration and put him in touch with my brother who could use a couple of kind words from ■■ old friend."

Barry: Wow.

Jimmy: That was the only thing I could find about the band on the internet that was ■ description of what you sounded like.

Brian: Wow. That's amazing. That gave me chills. That's the highest compliment in the world.

Jimmy: I also heard in the last decade that you guys were a primary influence on The Busboys as well.

Brian: Well actually, I know Kevin O'Neill, ■ lot of those guys in those groups—Fishbone and stuff—they remember us on the scene way before them.

Barry: A Fishbone guy hung out in Madame Wong's in our dressing room all night. He was just laying around listening to us.

Brian: But I mean they knew us. Norwood Fisher (of Fishbone)—amazing bass player, great guy. We knew all those guys. We had been around. We had ■ reputation. We weren't going to do what everyone else was doing. Everybody was shaving their sound completely, committing to ■ formula—or not ■ formula but it didn't feel natural for me. I have to have some funk, hard groove in order to do the kind of guitar playing I like to do.

And so ■ lot of the musicians always used to say, "You know what? We used to love hearing you guys play because you guys were playing stuff that is timeless." We had ■ punk attitude. Our music, ■ lot of the time, it didn't go that way. Some of the time it did. We had some pretty aggressive stuff.

Jimmy: Did you guys ever get a chance to record?

Brian: I asked Tito Larriva to produce us and he said, "Yeah, man. I'd love to." He hooked us up with a guy who had some access to studio time, Noah Shark. He was the head engineer at Shelter Records on Hollywood Boulevard. He was a well-known producer and he had a partner, Max Reese, who was a great engineer. Tito was going to produce ■■ but he goes, "You know what, Brian? I am going to be totally honest. I want you to work with Noah Shark. He's Tom Petty's producer. My hope is you guys, with his sound production and the way you guys play, you guys could get a really good deal. And that'd benefit all of us, if you guys get ■ good deal." Tito goes, "You guys got something."

Jimmy: There always been this separation of the East L.A. punk scene in the '70s and the east side sound of the '60s. Was there any kind of overlap?

Brian: Absolutely. Jesse Velo's ■ soulful cat. He grew up playing R&B, too. He knows that stuff. Matter of fact, we had a couple occasions to play together for a couple of

functions. It was fun, man, playing with him, and him being—he's a very good musician. Some people always slam punk musicianship. I think that's totally bunk because some of the best musicians that I've ever seen come out of punk. Look at Flea. People would kill to have that kind of feel. And I don't know anyone more punk than Flea. He was in Fear, for god's sake.

Jimmy: He was in The Weirdos, too.

Brian: I've been knowing Flea a long time. We go way back.

Jimmy: It's funny because you mentioned earlier. You had this problem finding a place to fit in the spaces. You were Black guys from East L.A. More "ese" for Black kids to handle, too black for Chicanos.

Brian: For a lot of them, but we still—come on—they still made us close all the shows. [laughs]

Jimmy: It seemed like ■ problem until you actually played.

Brian: But, see, most of the people who were involved in the scene that we played in, we knew. I never was around getting invited to play out in Hollywood with the other bands, like at the....

Jimmy: East L.A. Night.

Brian: East L.A. Night. Those guys were playing the Whiskey. We were writing in the studio, working, doing all that kind of stuff, too. Playing around with everybody else and we didn't get offered those kinds of gigs. That is ■■ of the things I am kind of bummed out about, missing shots to play those spots at that time. But we still played good shows.

In Warriors, we opened for the band Kingfish, who had members of Grateful Dead in it at the time, and the Knack. We opened for the Knack ■ week after they signed a big million dollar deal. And Bruce Gary stood in the wings with his sticks and played along with us. "Yeah, you guys rock. You guys rip." He congratulated us. "You guys were great." I like Bruce Gary. People can knock the Knack if you want to, but that "My Sharona," drum beat, man.

Barry: That kind of stuff—whatever we were doing was cool because we were doing what we wanted to do. And you got people like Van Halen saying, "Yeah you got the gig here. You guys kick some butt here," when they were the house band at Gazarri's (famous, long gone Sunset Strip nightclub), that encourages you to keep on doing what you're doing. Main thing is having fun. What we always try to do is rock'n'roll.

Jimmy: Those little pigeonholes people put people in, musicians don't care.

Brian: Completely different zone about life. You know what it is, man. The zone when you're playing, communicating with another human being and you're making ■ sound. I love making some music, make some melody. But, "Make some noise," it's ■ very good term.

Jimmy: My favorite story about the Ramones, this guy was on the radio. He loved the Ramones—greatest band he ever saw—they go to CBGB any chance they got. When it first started, they were there every

weekend. It was Daryl Hall. Hall And Oates used to go see the Ramones. Two disparate types of music, and they loved the Ramones. **Brian:** Every now and then they made a song completely different from everything they do because they wanted that alternative edge. They made some pretty wild records. They worked with Todd Rundgren. That guy is one of my key influences in life. He's the one who sealed it for me to play guitar, keyboards, bass, and drums. And I could play those instruments with a band so I am very grateful for his influence—when I heard that record *Something/Anything?*, ■ double record he did where he played all the instruments. And I know Stevie Winwood played a lot of his own instruments. Todd's ■ guy I think that sometimes does some of the coolest stuff in ■ punk way. He's done some pretty edgy stuff, too.

Jimmy: Pushing your boundaries.

Brian: Absolutely, man. He was in The Nazz. A lot of people say The Nazz is the first punk band ever.

Jimmy: Let's talk about the Vex. Did you guys play both of the early locations?

Barry and Brian: Yeah.

Jimmy: Did you notice a different vibe between them?

Brian: When we played Vex at Paramount Ballroom, we were The Shades at that time and we were playing a different type of music. It wasn't as hard. It was a little bit more new wavey or whatever you wanna call it.

Barry: Ska influence, too.

Brian: Yeah, some early Oingo Boingo influence we were doing.

Barry: Some crazy type shit to go along with that crazy.

Brian: That's when we played at the Vex. That's around the time of that whole hardcore thing with the riots on Brooklyn Avenue. We were playing around there at that time. We were watching some Huntington Beach bands there.

Jimmy: You didn't play at the Self-Help Graphics one?

Brian: Yeah, a few times. Actually, when Rudy left we were an extremely tight band suddenly without a powerful drummer. Our manager Mike Red found ■ incredible eighteen-year-old white kid from Whittier named Art Foulkes who did his first gig with us at Self Help Graphics and was amazing. The crowd was deafening.

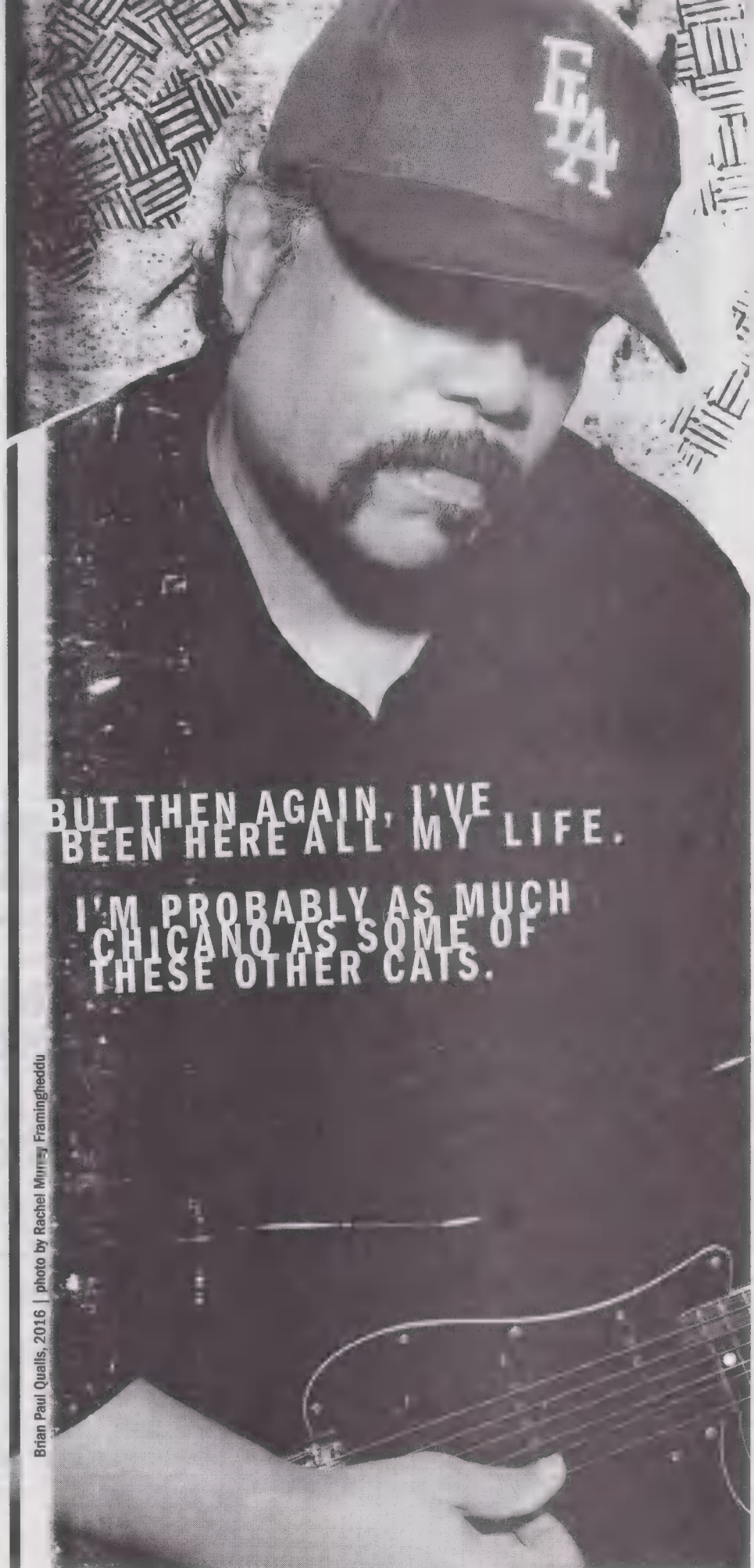
Jimmy: What significant impact do you think the Vex had on the scene, other than the fact that it existed?

Barry: I think it was a positive effect, as far as you got the other side of the river coming over.

Brian: Exposing 'hood to the world.

Barry: That's what humanity—some brotherhood and stuff. Even though there were people acting crazy and being stupid and getting in fights and that kind of stuff, that's what people do. But it still brought the west side to the east side. That was a really cool thing.

Brian: I think it could have been a little more. If there's increased unity amongst

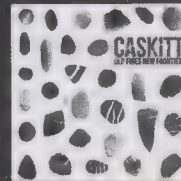


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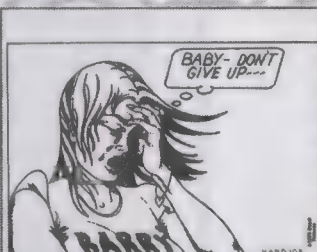
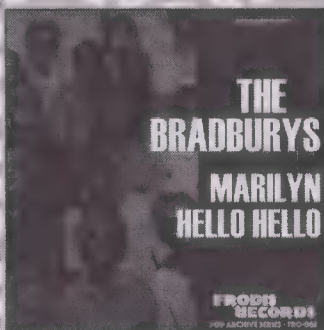
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the groups and parties—even more, even bigger, and even better. But I think the Vex has been totally positive. You talk about all these people trying to turn the Boyle Heights neighborhood into something chic, gentrification or whatever you wanna call it... It's just good to do things on a creative level like they did and then allow it to be a showcase.

Jimmy: It opened that dialogue from both sides.

Brian: It wasn't the only avenue, don't get me wrong. The Warriors found being a part of that whole thing on our own, because we worked hard. We played gigs constantly—Tuesday nights, Wednesday nights, and pulling pretty good crowds, at least being able to pay for our beer and our gas. It wasn't like we paid to play or anything. I got this little certificate that the guys gave me called the Vex award. I've got it where I've got my license for being a licensed and ordained minister. I have it up there.

Jimmy: The sacred and the profane.

Brian: Oh, it's like fire and ice man. That's what we live, man, and that's kind of where it is—two ultimate extremes. But with that being said, I'm not your average minister. My gospel is this whole other thing than what most people think ministers do, but I'm real man. That is the only thing you can be when you don't really have a whole lot. But I just want people to know that there were a lot of good musicians, a lot of good people a part of that punk scene. And they all put their heart into being the best that they can be. I believe each and every one of those groups—Los Illegals, The Brat, Odd Squad, The Stains—that came through there and were a part of that thing. They should all be making music for a living fully today instead of doing anything else. Very few of us ever made it out of that.

Jimmy: It's interesting that you mentioned you guys didn't seem to have difficulty getting shows outside. Some of the other ones said they had a hell of a hard time getting out of East L.A.

Brian: Well, the thing is, in either band, The Warriors or The Shades—I never had a band full of little guys, small guys. In The Warriors, it was a good name because we were no big. The punks used to try to spit on us. I remember kicking someone once at a gig and they went crazy. "All that is cool, but don't spit on me man. I'll kick you." And he did. So I kicked him. He was like, "All right, that's cool." And everybody was like, "Yeah, that's cool."

Barry: I came offstage.

Brian: Yeah, Barry jumped off the stage!

Barry: At the building, the original Vex, I had my acoustic-electric guitar in my hand. Dude came and he kept on coming. He came up again. I came off stage. When I came down, I did a little roll. My homeboy's son was right there. He helped me back up. I jumped back up on stage and kept on playing.

Brian: And people went crazy. The Vex went crazy! It was funny. All we were saying, like, "Okay guys, we're down with it but

come on, man. We're at home. This is our neighborhood, okay. Give us our space."—and at that time that was really cool. "We're not a punk band. We love you guys. We support you guys, but we're a rock'n'roll band. Don't spit on us." [laughter]

Barry: I went to that Hollywood thing we were talking about earlier when The Plugz headlined. Everybody was there. Art was doing his thing and this blonde girl, I seen her running. She's hanging with these Chicano chicks. Somebody, I think Thee Undertakers are playing. I'm there just checking them out like I do and this chick comes up. She kept slamming into me. They're doing their slams around and everything. She stepped on my foot. I finally told her, "Look, stop. Don't do that." And she was like, to me it seemed was like, "Get involved or get out of here." And I ain't going. So she came and I just went like this. I kinda pinched her right here (on the inside of the arm), right? She's all like "Ahhh!" and I say, "Hey, it's just a new punk thing it's called the pinch." [laughter] She run over to her girlfriends. They were looking at me but it was like, "You don't know who I am, girl." I know all these people here. I came down here to see my friends play. That slamming stuff, spitting on you and everything, I loved all that, man. Just don't do it to me.

Brian: You want to participate in that. There was this guy who used to follow us all the time, Steve Stick. He was the nicest guy, man, but he was a pit fanatic, you know what I mean? He did all the antics that they did back in that time. Punk evolved. It got beyond that. Moshing went to another level later on when hardcore came out. In those days, it was very different. I used to be amused by a lot of that. I used to say to people, "I am not trying to tread on your thing, just don't beat me up." [Everyone laughs.]

Jimmy: Let's talk about the Odd Squad a little bit. How did you get involved with the Odd Squad? Were you there at the beginning of it?

Barry: Nah. Our band The Shades broke up and they lived down the street from me. I went to school with Angela (Vogel) and her sister's older brother. So I've been knowing them forever. Richard, the drummer, Angela's husband, I started working with him. He laid tile. I was learning how to lay tile to make a couple extra bucks. Monica, the bass player, had left the band. They asked if I wanted to play. Started jamming with them. That's when I really got to know them.

Brian: Angela from Odd Squad was in the Girl Scouts and I sang at my sixth grade graduation. And she told me, "Brian I watched those grown-ups stand up and give an eleven-year-old a standing ovation." I had a gray guitar. I have a Silvertone guitar that my kids just bought me, like the one I had as a kid, and she goes, "You're still there with your silver guitar." It blew me away. "That's nice, Angela. I never even knew that." But that was kind of fun. But after The Shades broke up, I was glad he went off and played with somebody else because we had been

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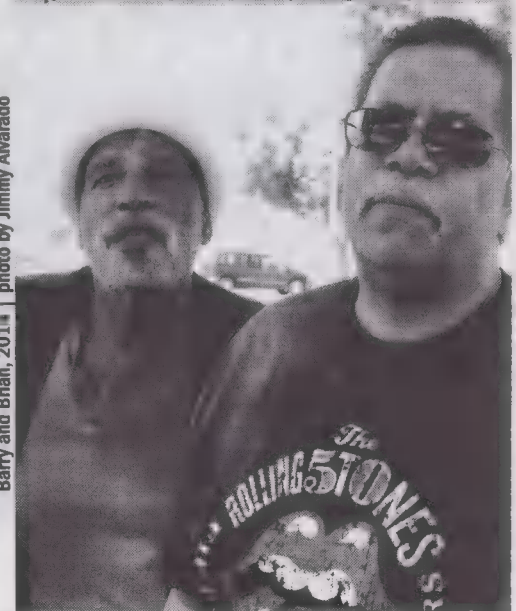
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playing together in bands a long time. We needed to play with other people, broaden a little bit. He played the Street Scene (a huge, annual city-sponsored music event that took place on the streets of downtown Los Angeles. Ceased in 1986 after riots broke out the last couple of years).

Barry: Yeah, I was playing with them. Angela was writing songs and playing rhythm guitar. Rudy Medina from the Brat was playing guitar and I was running with Rudy a lot and the Street Scene came. This last one that they had, we were supposed to go on at one o'clock on this little stage over by the police station. They came and told us we got cancelled from there. And we were gonna play on the Spring Street stage, the big stage at eight o'clock. We were between Tierra and The Blasters. [laughter] They had this big stage. We're underneath, changing and all that. Rudy ended up not playing with us, and Manuel Valdez ended up playing with us, after one rehearsal. It was pretty cool. And that was the end of that band. I think they broke up after that.

Jimmy: And they only managed one official recording, the one that was on the *Los Angelinos* compilation, right?

Barry: They did an EP with Tito Larriva.

Brian: I recorded an album with them right in their rehearsal studio. I did a remote recording. I had a 12-track tape machine that I took down there.

Barry: I got a couple those that my brother did with them. I listened to them the other day. It was really good.

Jimmy: I think Dan Vargas (writer, musician, and former Odd Squad manager) says he has an album that was recorded at some point.

Brian: The Odd Squad was a neighborhood band. I've known Richard for a long time.

Jimmy: I don't think they ever got anything out other than that one song. Same thing with

Warriors and Shades. Did you guys ever get anything released?

Brian: No we didn't. Matter of fact, I'm rerecording some of the songs we did in The Shades. I can't assemble that band again. It's too diverse. But the last version of The Shades, we did a couple of songs. And I am recreating them—they sound exactly like they did on the last 16-track masters that we had recorded. Somehow those tapes got ruined and I could not continue to work on them. So now—Barry and I have had a studio for years—I'm a recording engineer for thirty years now. I do a lot of different recordings, so some of that old Shades stuff at some point is going to get released. I hope to get it on iTunes. Maybe I can even upload some high definition files. I try to keep my computer state of the art so I can do the hi-res files. That's the best way to hear music. I got a really nice system in my studio. I can always hear the proper full range. I am very blessed. I can do anything.

Jimmy: So The Warriors turned into The Shades, what led to The Shades breaking up and when was that?

Barry: Cinco de Mayo '85. Band broke up. We played our last gig with a gospel group at L.A. City College.

Brian: I remember that. That was The Warriors. Randall was playing with us. Randall wasn't in The Shades.

Barry: Randall was in The Shades when we broke up, remember? We went to Griffith Park and that's when we broke up. Randall was with us, the new Shades. Remember?

Brian: I don't remember it happening like that.

Barry: Okay.

Jimmy: Did you guys get involved in the punk, new wave thing after that? Or was there a point you became disillusioned with it?

Barry: Well, for me, it was just something to do. "Let's just grab a hold of this." It's really

inspiring that you ain't got to play like Jimi Hendrix to have a good time and do your thing. I got what I could get from it, but I was never pissed off at these people or those people. Been there, done all that. By the time the punk thing came to me, I was damn near thirty years old. [laughter] Shit, I wanted us to make some money. They said they're not signing rock'n'roll bands now. They're not signing the Van Halen guys. They're signing The Knack guys. It was never a political thing with me. I didn't even like when the Black Panthers used to come down to Aliso Village (the local public housing projects) trying to turn people on to being a Black Panther. Peace, love, dove. Let's be happy. Let's live together. "Here, put this in your mouth." Boom.

Jimmy: Did you remain active in music after that whole period?

Barry: Sure. He did a lot of studio work in that time. I did a lot of dumb stuff for a few years then I got saved by the blood of the lamb. Boom, next thing I know, "Let's turn this around. Praise the Lord with it." So we had a Christian rock band, if that's what you want to call it. Did that for some years. In the 2000s we had another band. We were outside the doors of church, playing the clubs. We were called Sons Of Thunder. Did that for a few years. The past few years, we had a three-piece band, trio called TBR.

Brian: With Ruben Gonzalez. Ruben was one of the inspirations to me. When I was thirteen years old, I saw him playing in a heavy rock band called Euphoria. They just got together—the bass player and Danny, the guitar player. I saw those guys playing Blue Cheer songs in '67, '68. Blue Cheer was kind of like punk, really heavy, really hardcore—and that was always Danny. Matter of fact, Danny—he was around punk before everybody—had this band called Danny Death And The Skulls. The Skulls were playing with the heavy Hollywood bands. They were the darlings of the first early Masque.

Jimmy: Oh, Billy Bones and all those guys.

Brian: Yeah. Danny Death started that band.

Jimmy: Danny Hidalgo, right?

Brian: Yeah! He was a hippie in the '60s. We were always really good friends. I just talked

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to him the other day. He was the guy who would encourage me. Some musicians, guitar players don't like to always show you their licks. They'll turn around. Don't want you to see exactly what they're doing. But Danny was always very cool and very encouraging. Dave Hidalgo (Los Lobos guitarist/vocalist) was always very encouraging, too. I admire both of them. They protected me from getting ■ attitude.

Jimmy: Were they related somehow?

Brian: Not at all. Just guys from the neighborhood, buddies. Danny was from City Terrace.

Jimmy: I've always wondered. I've seen the credits on some of The Skulls' songs as "D" and I never know if it's David Hidalgo or Danny Hidalgo. That's interesting to know. What a trip.

Brian: TBR is coming all the way back to that. What we were doing was all the old classics. We had ■ tendency to really recreate those songs for people live, in the club. When you hear some bands doing that in ■ club and it sounds like the record, you go, "I don't mind putting something in the jar." That was the kind of band TBR was. If somebody had ■ party or little get together they'd have us play. We didn't charge a lot.

Jimmy: Were you guys aware that the East L.A. punk scene continued on, generations after you stepped out of it? The whole backyard scene.

Brian: Absolutely. That backyard scene started back when we were doing it. Before we were doing it, backyard parties were not on that scale. There were promoters promoting backyard parties. We had guys who could find houses for us. "So-and-so's parents are out of town for the week," you know what I mean? "They got ■ big backyard. They got ■ pool in that yard." Whatever it took to have ■ good backyard party. TBR and The Warriors used to ride that train. We rode that train real good.

Jimmy: Well it's a trip because it almost become like ■ proving grounds now, and it's ■ scene unto itself.

Brian: Absolutely. It's practical, doesn't cost anything. And that's what rock'n'roll used to be back when we were kids growing up. You set up and you played *anywhere*. And this separatist stuff that we all do, we get so self-absorbed. We don't have that human interaction with bands, you know? I wanna see more live music. I think some restrictions need to be taken away from people going out and giving people joy. Provided you're not inciting a riot, what's the harm?

Jimmy: Because the kids now—the cops come to the houses and they hit them with big fines if they get caught having ■ backyard party. For my generation, which was early '80s and kind of hit our stride '86-'88, we looked to backyards because we didn't have the access to the clubs, because nobody gave ■ shit about punk rock at that point, and it sort of became like its own scene. It's like you said, you get in where you fit in. They wouldn't

take us at the clubs. We couldn't afford to play in ■ hall. "Fuck it. We'll play in the backyard." And as we moved out, our backyard punk scene kind of morphed into Chicano grove scene of the '90s, there was ■ whole other generation that took over the backyards. Then those guys go into the clubs, then another generation has taken it over ever since.

Brian: Well, to me it was never a slight. Eddie Van Halen comes out of backyard parties. We played in Montebello and he was there watching us play once. He was not a rock star at the time, just a guy out of Pasadena—him and David Lee Roth. When I started doing that, all the way up until later, there were ■ lot of amazing musicians that came out of that scene. I'm actually really glad to hear some of those things you've been saying, how it continued.

Jimmy: What interests me is how each generation has been taking punk rock in East L.A.—these different generations of kids have glommed onto it and just create with it. And it's weird, like, why punk? There could have been anything. Why punk?

Brian: Well, you know, it just was, and that was a trip.

Jimmy: It's a trip because that definition of punk has always kind of been—like you said, you can't unlearn playing. That first generation, especially. We learned ■ we went along, but you guys had already been playing.

Barry: Why punk? It's either that or the blues. You start off with the blues. Three chords, basically. You got that energy and you got these dreams and all you gotta do is learn three chords. Let's have some fun.

Jimmy: So the simplicity is the attraction?

Barry and Brian: Yeah.

Barry: And it's the whole attitude, because now you're coming of age. You're ■ teenager, a young adult. That's all the time. Going through the stages growing up in life, coming to these teenage years, it's a trip to me. When I see kids on the bus or at schools I go work with, how they're dressed. I talk to a guy, like, "Hey, you a musician?" I can tell by his T-shirt and long hair what kind of music he's into and we'll get to talkin'. But these kids are like—my grandkids are older than these kids! But I been witnessing it all the time, all along.

And an old vato like me—I meet some kid with long hair, favorite band shirt, we get to talkin' rock'n'roll. We're right there with each other.

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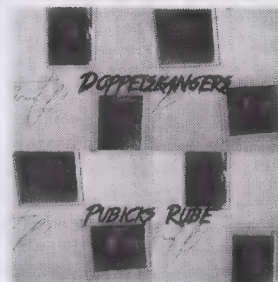
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YOU CAN'T TAKE PUNK MUSIC AND THINK OF IT IN TERMS OF THE PAST BECAUSE IT'S STILL HERE.

Brian: I was watching something on TV and I saw some really old punk band get back together. I forgot who it was, but they were playing great, man. They were tight. It was almost they were as good as they used to be and it's survived and it's continued on and it's still here, man, alive and well. You can't take punk music and think of it in terms of the past because it's still here.

Jimmy: Is there anything else you guys want to talk about that hasn't been brought up or you think we should talk about?

Brian: I sound like a broken record. I've always had to lean to what is happening, rather than being "old school" all the time. I always gotta try the new thing. And I give a lot of credit to a lot of people who were very creative, even though they weren't super musicians like I was used to listening to. I started to respect people who only knew three chords as much as I did a guy who was a good musician who just played rather than communicating.

So I'm glad that I watched some great punk bands through the neighborhood and to be a part, sharing a stage with a lot of them, being an influence on a lot of them. That's what they all tell me, I'm glad. I'm glad when they were kids they had a chance to hear those bands tearing it up. And it's because we played in such big places for next to nothing. Fifty cents, a dollar you could get to those bands play. Even when The Shades played, we would let everyone in for free. We'd make money on booze. [laughter]

I had a good time. I'm always ready to jump up and play with everybody. I only wish I could do more recording and production of people in East L.A., man. I was really bummed out there wasn't enough people who had expertise. I started working at a music store, became an engineer, and learned how to record as much as I could.

We were just looking at a piece of property that used to be a big fellowship apartment. They just sold. It used to be where the Japanese detainees were. I always said, "Man, it'd be nice to have a recording studio, a rock'n'roll kind of academy where people could come in, learn to pluck a guitar, and do that. Man, if we would have had just more access to recording studios back then and not have to depend on other people, be able to have enough time to create like a lot of the other big groups did, we would have blown up. All those bands would have blown up even more. I did work with The Illegals and helped produce some stuff with them, but I just wish there were more opportunities that we could've had to make some really killer records. Make some noise.

Barry: Yeah, bring it all back! Love each other. Stop all this shootin'.



Brian Qualls

Cousin Randal "Duke" Slayton



TOP FIVES

RAZORCAKE



- Adel Souto**
- Warfare, *Demo 2016 CS*
 - G.L.O.S.S., *Trans Day of Revenge 7"*
 - Bloody Knives, *I Will Cut Your Heart out for This 12"*
 - Pope, *Fiction 12"*
 - William Onyeabor, *LP Box Set 1 and 2*

- Andy Garcia**
1. Blazing Eye, *Lonely Corpse 7"*
 2. Rakta, *III LP*
 3. Sadist, *Live at the Unveiling Videocassette*
 4. Daubyflin, *Drepa Drepa 7"*
 4. Poliskitzo, live at 5 Star Bar, 6/15/16

- Art Ettinger**
- ANTISEEN, *We're # One! 12"EP*
 - Descendents, *Hypercaffium Spazzinate LP*
 - Klasse Kriminale, *1985-2015: 30 Anni Dopo 7"*
 - Control, *United in Blood LP*
 - The Interrupters, *Say It Out Loud LP*

- Bill Pinkel**
- Martha, *Blisters in the Pit of My Heart*
 - Muncie Girls, *From Caplan to Belsize*
 - Toys That Kill, *Sentimental Ward*
 - Descendents, *Hypercaffium Spazzinate*
 - The Reddman / Friends Of Cesar Romero discographies I bought off Bandcamp

- Billy Kostka**
- Mirror, *Universal Dismay*
 - Liquids, *Hot Ligs EP*
 - Kaleidoscope, *V2 No.1*
 - Rik & The Pigs, *Volume II*
 - Devo, *Hardcore Devo Volume 1 & 2*

- Candace Hansen**
- Top 5 Ska Puns of 2016*
1. Skamagatchi (Melissa R.)
 2. Poli Ska Degree (Cynthia P.)
 3. Skaberry Shortcake (Ritchie S.)
 4. Iowa Skacus (Ritchie S.)
 5. Make America Skank Again (Courtesy of ■ man's hat at the Skacademy Awards in Anaheim.)

- Candice Tobin**
- Songs on Repeat with "Girl" in the Title*
1. "Radium Girls," Pinned In Place
 2. "Pretty Girl," Radioactivity

3. "Vampire Girl Prefers Me Alive," J Church
4. "Subway Girl," Audacity
5. "Not Just Another Girl," Marked Men

- Chad Williams**
- Top 5 in a Summer of Two New Descendents records. (Good luck everyone else...)*
1. Descendents, *Hypercaffium Spazzinate LP*
 2. Descendents, *Spazz Hazard EP*
 3. toyGuitar, *Move Like a Ghost EP*
 4. Mean Jeans, *Tight New Dimension LP*
 5. Extinct Exist, *Cursed Earth EP*

- Chris Mason**
1. Martha, *Blisters in the Pit of My Heart*
 2. Mikey Erg, *Tentative Decisions*
 3. Alice Bag, *Self-titled*
 4. Toys That Kill, *Sentimental Ward*
 5. Red Dons, *The Dead Hand of Tradition*

- Chris Terry**
- Richmond Nostalgia Top 5*
1. Young Pioneers, *First Virginia Volunteers LP*
 2. D'Angelo, *Voodoo LP*
 3. Avail, *4 AM Friday LP*
 4. Going swimming
 5. Excerpt from my novel-in-progress in the new issue of *Apogee Journal*

- Clara Acosta**
1. Dead To Me live ■ Against The Stream Buddhist Meditation Society
 2. Black Lives Matter demonstration and march in Inglewood
 3. Skating Polly
 4. My brother moving to Seattle, resulting in me finally getting my own room!
 5. Going to therapy for the first time ever, and loving every bit of it

- Craven Rock**
1. Poems of Jack Micheline
 2. Autonomous Mutant Festival 20
 3. Overheard advice from ■■■■ little girl to another in the park: "Use it to be funny or when you're angry. Don't overuse it or use it to be cool. Be careful with your profanity."
 4. Dave Fox's workshop on travel writing and his book, *Globejotting: How to Write Extraordinary Travel Journals and Still Have Time to Enjoy Your Trip!*

5. These movies: *Coonskin*, *Crawl or Die*, *You're Killing Me*, *Rid of Me*

- Daryl Gussin**
- Martha, *Blisters in the Pit of My Heart*
 - G.L.O.S.S., *Trans Day of Revenge 7"* and live
 - Toys That Kill, *Sentimental Ward*
 - Taxi, live at Gary's Place, Tucson, AZ
 - Dyke Drama, *Up Against the Bricks*

- Designated Dale**
1. *My Damage: The Story of a Punk Rock Survivor* by Keith Morris and Jim Ruland.
 2. The Black and Brown Comedy Get Down Tour 2016 with George Lopez, Eddie Murphy, Eddie Griffin, D.L. Hughley, and Cedric The Entertainer at the L.A. Forum 8/6/2016,
 3. Los Tigres Del Norte and Cafe Tacuba at the L.A. Forum 6/25/16.
 4. Pat Todd & The Rankoutsiders, and the return of The B-Movie Rats at Cafe NELA 7/15/2016.
 5. La Tuya at Casa de Vargas in Long Beach, CA 7/23/16.

- Eric Baskauskas**
- Top 5 Punkest Senses*
1. Hearing: It's why I bring earplugs to the show.
 2. Sight: How're you gonna get beat up by rednecks and jocks if they can't instantly see that you're different from them?
 3. Smell: Just like sight and sound, you definitely ■■■■ smell punk.
 4. Touch: There's a right way and a wrong way to ■■■■ into a stranger at full speed.
 5. Taste: I'll take twelve of your crappiest beers and whatever food you're about to throw away, please.

- Gabby Gonzalez**
- Desidia (LA)
 - Upset
 - Mecha Chief (LA)
 - Super Lunch
 - Shark Toys

- Griffin Wynne**
- Top 5 Reasons I Won't Go to Your Show*
1. Everyone's white.
 2. All the bands are all men.
 3. The parking lot is really dark and far away.
 4. Last time someone grabbed my chest and no one believed me/cared.
 5. My bed is more comfortable than the literal margin of the room.

- Jamie Rotante**
- Top 5 Bands to Fuel My End-of-Summer Manic Depression*
1. The Smiths
 2. Man... or Astro-Man?
 3. Bauhaus
 4. Thee Oh Sees
 5. The Cure

- Jennifer Federico**
- Top 5 Cartoons for People Who Love Music (Part I)*
- Home Movies: *Freaky, Outtie!*
 - Rick and Morty: *Show Me What You Got*
 - Home Movies: *Bye Bye Greasy*
 - Rick and Morty: *Mortygnight Run*
 - Bob's Burgers: *Glued*

- Jim Joyce**
- Five Horror Movies Over Five Decades for Your DIY Horror Film Fest*
1. *A Bucket of Blood* (1959) Coffeeshouse beatnik murder movie starring ■ youngish Dick Miller.
 2. *Dr. Terror's House of Horrors* (1960) It's actually a train, but who cares?
 3. *Death Line* (in U.S., *Raw Meat*) (1972) London subway cannibals—"mind the doors!"
 4. *The Howling II: Your Sister Is ■ Werewolf* (1985) Eastern European werewolves in L.A., castles, relentless nudity, fictional punk band.
 5. *In the Mouth of Madness* (1994) Sam Neil is ■ Stephen King-like dude whose books inspire diabolical mayhem. John Carpenter directs!

- Jimmy Alvarado**
- La Tuya gigs #1 (Café NELA) and #2 (Dan & Barbara Vargas' Summer BBQ). ¡Hasta la victoria siempre!
 - Alice Bag, *Self-titled LP*
 - Adolescents, *Maximum Density LP*
 - Sherman Alexie, *The Lone Ranger and Tonto Fistfight in Heaven* (book)
 - Watching reruns of the *Mary Tyler Moore Show*

- Joe Dana**
1. My band, Pu\$\$y-Cow, putting out our first vinyl release and getting some pretty good feedback overall.
 2. Public Enemy, Ice-T, EPMD at the Hollywood Palladium
 3. Mack Sabbath at the Regent and Boots Electric at Loaded in the ■■■■ night
 4. Playing with Bitchin' Seahorse and Red Pony Clock at the Redwood
 5. Playing with Manhattan Murder Mystery for the first time and Undercover Monsters at the Redwood

- John Miskelly**
- Top Five Bangers Songs in No Particular Order. Bye Bangers!*
1. "The Trousers of Time"

Blisters...

2. "I Don't Feel Like I'll Ever be Clean Again"
3. "There Was a Positive Vibe—When No One Was Left Alive"
4. "Complete Doom"
5. "Last of The Big Dippers," "A Quite Different Coastline," "The Mitigation Committee" Oops guess that's seven. Fucking with your fascist quinary paradigm, suckers!

Jon Mule

1. Night Witch (Tallahassee, Fla.)
2. Sculpture Club at Redwood Bar
3. G.L.O.S.S., *Trans Day of Revenge*
4. Nails, *You Will Never Be One of Us*
5. Sitting in on Thirsty Thursdays, Presented by The Dollar Boys, KChung Radio

Juan Espinosa

- Mannequin, *Three Songs + Three More Songs* CS
- Descendents, *Hypercaffium Spazzinate* LP
- Rakta, *III* LP
- Toys That Kill, *Sentimental Ward* LP
- Martha, *Blisters in the Pit of My Heart* LP

Kayla Greet

1. Ian MacKaye giving a tour of the Dischord house and distro in Virginia
2. Barenaked Ladies, OMD, and Howard Jones at Marymoor Park b/w after hours BBQ party
3. Descendents, *Hypercaffium Spazzinate*
4. Dyke Drama, *Up Against the Bricks*
5. Bad Cop/Bad Cop, The Atom Age, Murderburgers, Hilltop Rats at The Kraken

Kevin Dunn

1. The Hospital Job, *Never Get Cold*
2. Pears, *Green Star*
3. Mind Spiders, *Prosthesis*
4. Toys That Kill, *Sentimental Ward*
5. Dott, *The Beverly Baldwin* EP

Kurt Morris

1. Dinosaur Jr., *Give a Glimpse of What Yer Not*
2. White Lung, *Paradise*
3. Kowloon Walled City, *Grievances*
4. Nails, *You Will Never Be One of Us*
5. Julie Doiron (everything)

Louis Jacinto

- My Top 5 Alice Bag Videos 2016*
1. "Modern Day Virgin Sacrifice"
 2. "Poisoned Seed"
 3. "No Means No"
 4. "Weigh About You"
 5. "He's So Sorry"

Mark Twistworthy

- Brix Smith, *The Rise, The Fall, and The Rise* (book)
- Martha, *Blisters in the Pit of My Heart* LP
- Carl Sagan's Skate Shoes, Self-titled LP
- Dinosaur Jr., *Give a Glimpse of What Yer Not* LP
- Prince, new stuff!

Mark Seward

1. Shallow Cuts, *Empty Beach Town*
2. Chandeliers, *Breaker*
3. Basement Benders interview in #93

4. Glean Garden, live
5. Random check-in texts from J Wang

Megan Razzetti

- Toys that Kill, *Sentimental Ward*
- The Falcon, The Copyrights, Sam Russo Mikey Erg! at the Troubadour on 7/16
- Full Garage (South Korea) and Spanish Love Songs at the Redwood 7/21
- The Falcon, *Gather up the Chaps* LP
- Silver Spring

Michael Fournier

- *Berzerkoids* by MP Johnson (book)
- *Trouble Boys: The True Story of the Replacements* by Bob Mehr (book)
- G.L.O.S.S., *Trans Day of Revenge 7"*
- Spokenest, *Gone, Gone, Gone* LP
- *This Is Boston, Not L.A.* vinyl reissue

Mike Frame

1. Tegan And Sara, *Love You to Death* CD
2. Descendents, *Hypercaffium Spazzinate* CD
3. Kristin Kontrol, *X-Communicate* CD
4. Pat Todd & Rankoutsiders, *Blood & Treasure* CD
5. Robbie Fulks, live at Swallow Hill in Denver

Nick Toerner

- Mikey Erg, *Tentative Decisions* LP
- Shellshag, *Why'd I Have to Get So High?* LP
- Der Faden, "Best Guess" b/w "Filaments" 7"
- Toys That Kill, *Sentimental Ward* LP
- Descendents, *Hypercaffium Spazzinate* LP

Nicole X

- Top 5 Shows of 2016 (So Far)*
1. Tacocat, Boyfriends, Homosuperior, April 16, Comet Ping Pong, DC
 2. Bleached, May 2, Bottom of the Hill, San Francisco, Calif.
 3. Nothing, Culture Abuse, Wrong, June 21, Slim's, San Francisco, Calif.
 4. Alice Bag, Midnite Snaxxx, Quaaludes, July 9, El Rio, San Francisco, Calif.
 5. Modest Mouse/Brand New, July 28, Greek Theatre, Berkeley, Calif.

Nighthawk

- Beer and pizza at the Lobo Lounge
- Spruce Bringsteen and Cool Mutants, live in Evansville, IN
- Radioactivity and Bad Sports, live in Saint Louis
- Toys That Kill and The Brokedowns, live in Chicago
- Too \$hort, live in Saint Louis

Patrick Houdek

1. Sass Dragons, *True Adventure* LP
2. Seeing Chuck Dukowski perform with Flag at Punk Rock Bowling in Denver
3. Bad Cop/Bad Cop, The Atom Age, The Murderburgers, The Windermers at the Bluebird Theater, Denver, Colorado
4. The Windermers, *Continental Divide* LP
5. *Under the Big Black Sun: A Personal History of L.A. Punk* by John Doe with Tom DeSavia (book)

Paul Comeau

1. Old Lines/Will Potter, *To Build a Fire 7"*
2. Will Potter, *Green is the New Red* (book)
3. High Rider, *Armageddon Rock* CD
4. Kleinerwasserbär, *The Silent Hound* CS
5. Deafness By Noise, *A Long Way Down* CD

Paul Silver

1. Martha, *Blisters in the Pit of My Heart* LP
2. Yeesh, *Confirmation Bias* EP
3. The Falcon, The Copyrights, Sam Russo, and Mikey Erg at Ken Club, San Diego
4. Caskitt, The Penske File, Spanish Love Songs, and On Deck
5. The Doll Hut, Anaheim, CA
5. Direct Hit!, *Wasted Mind* LP

Replay Dave

- Big Eyes, *Stake My Claim*
- King Friday, *Dignity Crusade*
- Mikey Erg, *Tentative Decisions*
- J Church, *Horror of Life*
- Reactionary 3 / True North, Split LP

Rev. Numb

- Chrome Reverse, *You Say You Love Me 45*
- Lovesores, *Rock and Roll Animal 10"*
- The Connection, *New England's Newest Hit Makers* CD
- Indonesian Junk, Self-titled LP
- Graham Rae, *Soundproof Future* Scotland (book)

Rich Cocksedge

- Five Events I Attended (Chronological Order)*
- Wales v. Belgium, Euro 2016 Quarter Final at Stade Pierre-Mauroy, Lille, France
 - Radioactivity, Sievehead, Molar at The Lexington, London
 - War On Women, Haters
 - The Junction, Plymouth
 - Wonk Unit, Bobby Funk, Tinned Fruit, Bad Credentials at The Underground, Plymouth
 - Dag Nasty, Wonk Unit at The Fleece, Bristol

Radio Valencia 87.9FM, SFCA

1. The Devils, *God You Sinners* LP
2. Faking, *Goddamn Cowards* LP
3. Ghoul, *Dungeon Bastards* LP
4. Cult Values, *Cult Values* LP
5. Talky Tina, *Gang of Thieves* CD

Rosie Goncse

- My Top 5 Songs of the Summer*
1. "Sour Candy," Bleached, *Welcome the Worms* LP
 2. "Wednesday Night Melody," Bleached, *Welcome the Worms* LP
 3. "Think of You," Bleached, *Carter* EP
 4. "Indiana," Blowout, *No Beer No Dad* LP
 5. "Cents Cents Money Money," Blowout, *No Beer No Dad* LP

Lucci

- Angry Angles, Self-titled LP
- OBN IIIs, "Rich Old White Men" b/w "On the Verge of Collapse" 7"

- Citizen Blast Kane, *Straight to Video* Disc LP
- Sick Thoughts, "18 and Free" b/w "Choose Death" 7"
- Foster Care, *Sterilization* LP

Sean Arenas

- Outer Spaces, *A Shedding Snake* LP
- Hunt, *Branches* CD
- Rough Kids, Self-titled LP
- Blatz, *Mike Montano* LP
- Maadwest, *I Can't Believe We're All Idiots* CS

Sean Koenenick

- Latest LP Reissues*
1. Scream, *Fumble*
 2. Various Artists, *This Is Boston, Not L.A.*
 3. Magazine, *Once at the Academy*
 4. Pylon, *Live*
 5. The Rifles, *No Love Lost*

Simone Carter

- Top 5 Favorite Recent Discoveries*
- Flower Travellin' Band, *Satori* LP
 - Pinkwash, *Collective Sigh* LP
 - HBO's *The Night Of*
 - *Please Kill Me*, by Gillian McCain and Legs McNeil
 - Star Trek: The Next Generation Interactive VCR Board Game, A Klingon Challenge, by Decipher Inc.

Toby Tober

- Top Five Movies I Have Recently Enjoyed*
1. *Swiss Army Man*
 2. *Transparent*
 3. *David Cross: Making America Great Again*
 4. *Hunt for the Wilderpeople*
 5. *Captain Fantastic*

Todd Taylor

- Martha, *Blisters in the Pit of My Heart* LP
- Toys That Kill, *Sentimental Ward* LP
- Tenement, *Bruised Music, Vol. 2* LP
- Sun Bather, live and "Waiting" b/w "For Mig Er Det Ikke Lige Sa dan" 7"
- *My Damage: The Story of a Punk Rock Survivor* by Keith Morris and Jim Ruland (book)
- Dyke Drama, *Up Against the Bricks* LP
- NOFX: *The Hepatitis Bathtub and Other Stories* by NOFX and Jeff Alulis (book)

Tommy Vandervort

1. Toys That Kill, Meatwave, The Brokedowns, at Quenchers, Chicago
2. Canadian Rifle, The Brokedowns, Retirement Club, at Crown Liquors, Chicago
3. Salvation, *Royal Fucks*
4. Glean Garden, Self-titled CS
5. Oblivion, *Ambition Mission*, The Arrivals, The Mushuganas, 4-Way Split 7"

Ty Stranglehold

- Top 5 Bands I Saw Live in 1992*
1. SNFU
 2. Mudhoney
 3. Public Enemy
 4. Ministry
 5. Supersuckers



■ DAY, THE: *Evolution: 7"*

The 5th Day ■ a D.C. band that recorded in 1985 and ■ now just getting the 7" out. (I guess there really is a backlog in vinyl pressing these days.) It's ■ good job they did. The songs ride the line between punk'n'roll speed and early DC hardcore. "One Way Ticket" opens the record with ■ speed bomb featuring a classic '80s HC riff and ■ catchy chorus. The second experiments with some T.S.O.L. flouncyness without losing the speed. "Y.A.B.D." should have been a classic. This is an authentic relic for fans of early SoCal punk or DCHC interests. —Billups Allen (Self-released, 5thday.bandcamp.com)

50FOOTWAVE: *Bath White: LP*

I gather that this is the heavier, weirder project from two members of Throwing Muses. I don't have the expertise to make any meaningful comparisons there, but this is definitely noisy and heavy as far as that '90s alternative sound goes. The fuzzy guitar and grungy production ■ as nostalgic and familiar as anything, but the aggressive time changes mix it up into something strange. Kristin Hersh's distinctive vocals ■ pretty mesmerizing, especially ■ the superbly, lurchingly weird stuff like "St. Christopher." I have to mention that the title track manages to make the chord progression from Lenny Kravitz's "Fly Away" sound cool, so that's something, too. —Indiana Laub (Happy Happy Birthday To Me)

■ ■ ■ & THE BURRS:

A Burr for All Seasons: CD

If instrumental surf jams are your thing, friend, you've just hit pay dirt. The tinny recording quality and cassette format lends ■ certain nostalgic charm to the whole affair, but all in all, you know, be warned: it's still surf music without voices. —Keith Rosson (More Power)

ADOLESCENTS: *Manifest Density: CD*

I've been an Adolescents fan nearly as long as they've existed—seen many of their assorted incarnations and side bands, own ■ number of their albums, and have watched the ebb and flow of their career ■ they, and I, have aged. This latest release is a continuation of their most recent trajectory—songs are largely mid-tempo and lean ■■■■ towards the "punk" than the prototypical "hardcore" in their DNA, though the opener, "Escape from Planet Fuck," is about as thrashy as they ever got in their early days. Fans that ■■ get past preconceptions founded on an album more than three decades old and aren't put off by the "rock" swing in their undertow will still find most of the elements that defined their debut album and the band's legendary sound: churning guitar often peppered with dual-octave noodling, astute lyrics, rock-solid tunes, great backing vocals and Tony's inimitable howl. These Adolescents have matured into a formidable unit that delivers sinewy punk that is much smarter and nuanced than may be in evidence ■ first blush. Kick ass they



are, fan I remain. —Jimmy Alvarado (Concrete Jungle, outofvogue.de)

AGGRAVATED, THE: *First to Die: CD*

Good, old-fashioned antisocial hardcore. You know the drill. A bunch of dudes getting red-faced angry about how society sucks, the media is bullshit, and the world is going downhill fast. There is literally a song called "Downhill Fast." The anger is infectious, and that's ■ solid gauge of success for this sort of punk. As ■ bonus, they throw in a little horror punk ditty midway through the album. A little oasis from all the "fuck society" stuff in the form of a tune about the old zombie girl trope. Nice little gore break before getting back into the rage. —MP Johnson (D-Fens)

ALICE BAG: *Self-titled: LP*

Unbeknownst to the average punter, Ms. Bag has had ■ long career in music, and it ain't all been pandering to the prototypical "punk" sound—give ■ listen to the varied sounds of the Bags, Cambridge Apostles, Cholita, Goddess 13, Las Tres, Stay At Home Bomb, Punkoustica, Castration Squad, She Riffs, and anything else she's had her hand in and you get what I mean. The resulting album in question is decidedly "punk" in all the ways that matter—attitude, approach, ethos, content—right down to the selection of musicians wrangled to pull it off. There are also tunes that rock raw and raging like those whose knowledge of her oeuvre is limited to the six Bags tracks that made it out by 1981 will be craving. What makes this album the nine hundred pound gorilla it is, though, is the virtually seamless cohesion of the wildly diverse sounds and styles from which she's drawing inspiration—the

eleven songs here bounce from straight-up rockers, to echoes of '60s girl group hits ("He's So Sorry" serves both as cautionary tale of domestic abuse and a sly dig at woman killer Phil Spector by referencing the sound that made him famous), to quieter ballads, to pop, to slinky-rhythm rock, to full-bore punk, and they're delivered by Alice and her crackin' crew of cohorts in ■ way that makes it all feel like—duh, of course they go all together ■ well ■ they do. Anthemic, personal, pissed, joyous, introspective, vociferous; this is all that and so much more. —Jimmy Alvarado (Don Giovanni)

AMERICAN EAGLE: *Land of the Free Home of the Brave: 7" EP*

Unreleased NYC oi from 1989. One song is about how "national pride is in," another is about how they like to drink beer, "shouting oh so loud...Oi! Oi! Oi! Oi!" (I must admit, it's quite ■ twist to shout it four times instead of three), and the other is an ■ cappella cadence call, which I think I liked a little better when Madness did it and it was called "Chippunks Are Go!" I'm not really into national pride, but I do like beer and cadence calls. If you think about it, an all a cappella oi record would probably be pretty cool. Someone should get on that. Sometimes inspiration strikes in the shape of ■ size ten boot! BEST SONG: "Call to Arms." BEST SONG TITLE: I'm kind of "meh" on the song titles, frankly. FANTASTIC AMAZING TRIVIA FACT: On beer-colored vinyl, for a strong America! —Rev. Nørð (United Riot, unitedriotrecords.com)

ANGRY ANGLES: *Self-titled: LP*

In the summer of 2009 I was working on ■ article about Jay Reatard for

a publication that ■ longer exists. I never did finish the article, but I was tying together Reatard's output, from the first Reatards release through his then-new LP, *Watch Me Fall*. I came across Angry Angles in my research, having missed them completely during their active days (which happened to coincide with a several year period where I didn't buy much new music). I obtained a CD-R from ■ dubious source to see what was up. Said CD-R only has twelve songs, where this properly released LP has seventeen, so I'm familiar with most of the songs. Fans of Jay Reatard will already know what Angry Angles sound like, but for the unlucky few who haven't heard them (or should I say the lucky few who ■ hearing them for the first time?), Angry Angles is the logical predecessor to Reatard's solo releases, closest in sound and scope to *Blood Visions*. I am glad Goner made this collection official, ■ these songs deserve to be (and stay) in print. All the songs ■ great, but if I had to choose one or two to put on ■ mix, I'd pick "You Call It Love" or "Apparent-Transparent." Download includes the full LP plus ■ fierce ten-song live set from Gonerfest 3. —Sal Lucci (Goner)

ANTIDON'TS, THE: *Ate My Pizza: CS*

Up-tempo punk rock in the ■■ vein as 30 Foot Fall with the occasional sojourn into Angry Samoans territory and ■ dose of snot thrown in for good measure. The eight tracks ■ all pretty good, but "A Little Mad Sometimes" sticks out the most, mainly for using ■ sample from Hitchcock's *Psycho* instead of any vocals. The dialogue is played over a slow-paced musical accompaniment which captures the mood from the film very well. Bandcamp has two previously released albums up for a listen so I'll be heading there shortly. —Rich Cocksedge (GutterLoon)

ANTILLECTUAL: *Engage: CD/LP*

Although I really do like the clean, melodic sound of this band, it's the lyrics which really provide the main point of interest for me and that continues on *Engage*. Whilst the focus of the songs addresses negative issues, the line, "All I ever mean to be is purely optimistic," in "I Wrote This Song" goes some way to explaining how Antillectual sounds uplifting and positive. Musically, there ■■ many similarities to Bad Religion, even down to the ■ of harmonies, but there is more than enough of the band's own personality to avoid it being marked down ■■ direct clone. I'm hoping these Dutch punks can fit in another U.K. tour sometime soon. —Rich Cocksedge (Bird Attack / Redfield / Waterslide / Fusa)

ANTITHOUGHT: *The Letdown: LP*

This is the debut LP from Antithought from St. Louis and it's ■ ripper. Reminiscent of the best streetpunk bands of the 1990s like The Pist or August Spies, Antithought fly through non-melodic yet catchy anthems like there's no stop signs in sight. There

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used to be a lot of records like this one, but punk this pure is hard to come by these days. The vinyl is clear with black spatter and there's a cool printed sleeve with lyrics. I haven't had this level of instant connection with a new band in ages. Do yourself a favor and check out Antithought, unless you're anti-taste. —Art Ettinger (Collision Course)

AUXILIARY MAMMALS:

Self-titled: 12" EP

Dissonant noise rock rules the roost here. Singer's vocal delivery recalls Shannon Selberg, and the band itself often evinces echoes of a less pop-savvy Cows. Much of what's here follows the same basic sound and structure, which leaves it open to the pitfall of the tunes blending into one another, but they keep the contents—and the overall running time—in digestible chunks. —Jimmy Alvarado (Auxiliary Mammals)

BAD VISION: *Turn out Your Sockets*: LP

This Melbourne band is making every concerted effort here to hit as many bases as possible. The first couple of salvos are prime fodder for a sweet single straight outta the catalogs of Dirtmap, Modern Action, Hostage—all swaggering, snotty, primal West Coast-tinged thud punk. From there, they add a bit of artier influence to the mix, then suddenly you're deep into indie pop terra, then garage rock before they bounce back, forward, over and on all the above and many spaces in between. They largely succeed, dishing up an album that is both all over the

place and somehow coherent despite itself. —Jimmy Alvarado (Adagio 830)

BATTALION OF SAINTS: *Darkness 7"*

The thing about classic hardcore bands from the "good old days" coming back out and making new music today is that it is an incredibly hit-and-miss endeavour. For every Poison Idea putting something great out, there is a Fang doing the opposite. I am happy to report that San Diego's legendary hardcore band falls in the former category. This record is great! Fast, heavy, and urgent. Just like a Battalion Of Saints record should sound in any decade. Nice work, old timers! —Ty Stranglehold (Southern Lord)

BIROTE THE MUSICAL:

That Weird Boy Lorenzo: CD

Birote The Musical is a weird quasi-folk band from southern California. They make short, sometimes spastic songs that border on folk punk with their combination of shouting, bowed upright bass, and acoustic guitar, but ultimately have enough plugged-in instruments and jazzy arrangements that they end up sounding like something between Captain Beefheart and the Minutemen. This is freaky stuff. Despite some questionable track titles, I like it. —Lyle (Self-released)

BLACKBALL: *Visions of the Third Eye Undone*: 7"

Circle pit thrashcore that's as pummeling as it is charred. Ominous and destructive, the sound is straight

forward but powerful enough to win over any fan of the genre. Total fucking obliteration of the senses. Physical and psychological warfare reigning down on your unsuspecting pea brain. Executed with determination. Leaving no doubts left alive. This is a sick record. —Daryl (Sorry State)

BLATZ: *Blatz*: LP

When I saw this record in the *Razorcake* review bin, I lit up. Blatz was an influential band for me in high school. Their abrasive, fuck-all attitude spoke to me. I especially remember often listening to the Blatz/Filth split. This live record was originally intended as a benefit for Mike Montano of Filth, but, sadly, he passed away before its release and now it benefits 924 Gilman Street. I was hesitant to listen because, at the time of this performance in December 27, 2013, it had been twenty-one years since Blatz's breakup. That's a lot of time to get rusty. Boy, I was wrong. Blatz delivers all of the energy and rage present in their recordings from over two decades ago. *Mike Montano* is a testament to the good shit (and great noise) that can happen when folks get together to support one another. —Sean Arenas (Zafio)

BRONIES, THE: *More*: CD

I can't find anything on the internet about The Bronies, which is kind of cool in 2016, but it also means that I don't know where they're from or how sincere their devotion to My Little Pony is. All I can tell you is that this

CD is jaunty, four-track lo-fi pop joint in the vein of Hunx And His Punx or even the Unicorns. I like the heavy use of keyboard organ and the fact that the CD itself was obviously burned and hand-lettered. This is a gem. —Lyle (Dirty Rabbit, address listed)

BRONIES, THE: *Foods Co.*: CD

I was totally excited when I saw this. I came to the Bronies a year or two back when they sent something into *Razorcake* and I loved it. Super trashy-trashy garage just oozing with angst and grit. So I was really dismayed when I started listening to *Foods Co.* because, well, how can I put this nicely? It's like Bronies "Unplugged." Not to say that the music is bad—it's not—it's super chill, it just lacks bite. —Camille Reynolds (Dirty Rabbit)

BROOD, THE: *October Dreams*: CS

Holy crap! Philadelphia, Pa.'s The Brood again deliver the goods on this seven-song cassette. If you were fortunate enough to snag a copy of 2014's *Defective 7"*, you won't be disappointed with this. For those not as lucky, this baby is chock-full of Japanese and Scandinavian d-beat-influenced ragers that had my lips snarled and fist pumping in no time. If I had to draw comparisons, I'd probably mention World Burns To Death or maybe F-Minus. This release is pretty limited and the band doesn't seem to be doing any coast-to-coast tours any time soon, so I recommend you contact the band directly to get your paws on

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this puppy. —Garrett Barnwell (Self-released, filthybrood.blogspot.com)

BULLNETTLE: Self-titled: LP

I freely profess ■ profound ignorance of This Is My Fist's oeuvre. Outside of a split 45, I don't remember hearing anything else by 'em, so I can't really put this latest musical endeavor by their former singer against her previous work, draw comparisons, lament any potential perceived "sellout" moves that may be made here ("is that a guitar solo??? Oh, the humanity!"), or lament the "old" days when bands like this ruled the roost. Nope, I'm tasked with taking this at face value, ■ new band with a new album. Verdict: it's plenty good, kids—punk, mid-tempo, lo-fi tinged goodness, catchy without drowning in pop excess, with a dark thread weaving in and out to add some gravitas. The hooks are often subtle and sneakily effective. Good stuff. —Jimmy Alvarado (Dirt Cult)

BUM OUT: Pain Don't Hurt: CS

If there's ■■■ thing I know about Jawbreaker fans, they love bands that sound like Jawbreaker. If there's one thing I know about myself, I absolutely despise Jawbreaker. So the best thing I ■■■ do here is point y'all out to each other. —Craven Rock (Twistworthy)

CAROLE'S GOLD GYM:

Misappropriation of Fun: CS

From the garish cover art (punk's answer to No Limit Records?) to the ridiculous lyrics (he definitely just

said, "Maybe we could fish, or not, I don't care. I'm not trying to fuck a mountain"), this is stupid ■ fuck, absolutely hilarious, and weirdly legitimately good? Though, after ■ full listen or two, I think I may be playing up the goofiness ■ little, so don't let that description fool you into thinking this is another dreaded *joke band*. By the time we get to "No Pink Versions!", a synth-driven punk ripper, it's clear that whatever this project is, it goes ■ lot deeper than the party punk exterior would have you think. They have this silly-but-dead-serious aesthetic that fits in somewhere between Dead To Me and Dead Milkmen, strange as that may sound. Someone on this thing—I can't be more specific; vocals ■■ credited to seven different people—has an eerily Jello-like delivery that perfectly suits that vibe. It turns out that I know several people involved with this, so it's even more magical that this completely came out of nowhere for me. My only grievance is that something must have gone awry with the dubbing, so the cassette sounds like it's playing through a pillow. Doesn't really matter to ■■■ because I'm gonna ■■■ this free download code right now and start it over again. —Indiana Laub (Tiger Force Ultra / North By Northwest)

CASTOFF: Fun Step to Recovery: CD

Potent mix of Epitaph/Theologian-style punk rock by these San Diego, Calif. chaps. I'd venture to say if you thought highly of last year's *Lines and Passages*, you will be happy to find

stuff along those lines here. There is ■ dual-guitar attack that ■■■ its head at times, which seems at once slightly jarring yet welcome. At times, I was reminded of Dead Lazlo's Place and Pennywise, which might not come ■ too big of ■ surprise seeing that this was recorded by Fletcher Dragge at his Screaming Leopard Studios. These guys aren't reinventing the wheel or anything, but you can tell they are having fun, are busy putting music out, and ■■ playing shows, so I ain't gonna front. Cheers, fellas! —Garrett Barnwell (Morning Wood)

CATHOLIC GUILT: Cabin Fever: 7" EP

These Austrian heavies unleash another four stunners on this bit of wax and the world is that much a better place for their efforts. Their core is hardcore of varying tempos, but they aim well above the usual three/four-chord basics and instead turn in tunes more complex in structure and intent—dark, arty, fast where it's most appropriate, and just flat-out great. Cover looks like the artist, Anthony Christopher, has been hanging out with Nick Bliko. This is the kind of band upon which cults are built. —Jimmy Alvarado (Kim, kim-pop.org)

CELLULAR CHAOS:

Diamond Teeth Clenched: CD

Holy shit! Send the pallbearers home, guys; punk isn't dead after all. Cellular Chaos breathes some much-needed life into the scene with *Diamond Teeth Clenched*. A total aural assault,

Admiral Grey's virtuosic vocals distract you while her bandmates' jagged, syncopated playing cuts you to shreds. The epitome of excellence, *Diamond Teeth Clenched* merits five big ol' shiny stars. —Simone Carter (Skin Graft)

CHANDELI'ERS: Breaker: LP

I'll admit it. Even though I held on to my copy, I didn't "get" Chandeliers after their first EP. They had pedigree, and I could hear the songs were good, but something (maybe the mix?) failed to hook me. Fast forward and *Breaker* delivers an audio death by a thousand paper cuts, each song crisper and sharper than the next. Power pop not unlike the best and smartest '80s U.K. pub rock that can proudly stand side by side giants like Nick Lowe or Elvis Costello. Three distinct voices are blended together in harmony; keys, sax, and trumpet that accentuate, but never overpower; eleven tunes that bring the house down with every listen. Essential. —Matt Seward (Dead Broke / Dirt Cult)

CHARLIE CONTINENTAL: Time: CS

This release, called *Time*, is two songs. "Quit Wasting My Time," which is sixty-one seconds long, and "Nothin' But Time," which is sixty-two. Ironically, I want more. More songs, more length, more *Time*! Charlie Continental leaves ■■■ with just enough of their power-pop harmonies and feel-good '60s vibe to leave ■ good taste in my mouth. I played the cassette three

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times and wanted to play it again. —Jon Mule (Snappy Little Numbers)

CHEAP DATES, THE:

■ *Thousand Year Flood*: LP

Seven tracks of tense, angular punk rock from these Chicago, IL locals. The vocals are pretty anguished and there's a lot of interesting guitar phrasings throughout the cassette that thankfully keeps things interesting. The whole thing sounds like it was dropped headfirst into an echo chamber, which wore on me a bit, but the songs are all there and I guess that has me looking forward to something else from the band hopefully mixed a bit drier. —Garrett Barnwell (Don't Panic)

CHEATER SLICKS:

On Your Knees: LP

Reissue of the 1989 debut album from a Boston contribution to independent, unpopular, late-'80s garage rock. With the marriage of a certain infamous punk's brother Merle on bass, a wild, school-of-Biafra lead vocalist and raw, high-as-fuck, reckless rock'n'roll, what you have here is one maniacal record. Both behind and ahead of its time at once, the Cheater Slicks are a band in purgatory. Legendary to some, new to others, and forgotten by most. In any case, it's a net positive to have such a record back in print and available to the new breed of garage rock bands. If we're lucky, it will spur some of them to future greatness and shame the rest into quitting music altogether. —Chad Williams (Almost Ready)

CHROME REVERSE:

You Say You Love Me: 7" EP

Holy circumflex! The Parisian garage mafia channel the spirit burps of the Collins Kids, as filtered through the dancin' shoes of the Bristols! Hide your tweeters! The jig is up! You won't remember why you forgot why you liked listening to records after this one! When the record with the band's picture on the cover is the best one in the stack, all is right with the world. BEST SONG: "You Say (You Love Me)." BEST SONG TITLE: "Nameless." FANTASTIC AMAZING TRIVIA FACT: I bought a Plastic Bertrand 45 and a Real Kids album at the guitar player's record store once! —Rev. Nørb (Bachelor)

CIVIL UNION: *Seasick, Lovedrunk*: LP

Boring alterna-goth-rock. If Sonic Youth crossed with later-era Christian Death is your thing, maybe you'll dig this. Not me. Too bad they took a good punk band moniker. —Chad Williams (Melted Ice Cream)

CLEVER: *Kawaii Udi*: LP

For a while there, it seemed like Australia and New Zealand were regularly exporting awesome new records that were challenging and pushing boundaries. Maybe I haven't been paying attention and they have, but it's like the rate at which these records were gracing our shores has greatly lessened. Regardless, I was excited to see a record from Australia in my review batch. Maybe I set my

sights too high, but Clever failed to impress. It's apparent that Clever takes influence from The Fall and adds some noise rock influence. While such an abrasive mélange does have its appeal, Clever offers it up in repetitious spasms, concentrating solely on the burst and none of the build up. The result is maybe a bit too challenging for me, as it brings about constant anxiety, where I instead hoped to board a paranoid adventure. —Vincent (Homeless)

CODETALKERS: *Patterns*: LP

Taking off from a hardcore base, this veers off into all kinds of interesting terra—complex song structures built on complex rhythms, at times feeling like there's an almost jazz sensibility to their approach—and they still manage to remain firmly planted in their base and still rock the fuck out. Stunner, this one, and I'm sure they'll soon earn the distinction of being a "musician's band." —Jimmy Alvarado (Codex)

CODETALKERS: *Self-titled*: 7"

Hardcore for the thinkers outta the flatlands of Texas that excels at transitioning between testosterone-fueled yelling parts and sparse instrumental interludes. Feels like a band I would have learned about in column in *HeartattaCk*, mentioned between the likes of Yaphet Kotto, Trial By Fire, or Comadre. Hard hitting, impactful, and capable of putting some distance between themselves and the genre's expectations, but not

so much space that they lose any of the aggression or pacing that a hardcore 7" needs. —Daryl (Codex)

COMMUNITY: *Curse of Siam*: CD

I was into the mid-tempo garage rock vibe Community had going on, but the flat vocals sank this for me. My GPS app conveys more feeling than the vocals on *Curse of Siam*, and their emotionless delivery sank any chance I had of enjoying this. —Paul J. Comeau (Yet You)

COORDINATED SUICIDES:

False Promise: CD

Whiny, sloppy, grungy punk goodness. Adolescents meets Birthday Girl hardcore grunge. Good for flippant moods, bad traffic, hangnails, and warm beer. —Camylle Reynolds (AVRCRC)

COURETTES, THE:

The Boom! Dynamite!: 7" EP

Deliciously gritty, fuzzed-out garage from this Danish-Brazilian duo featuring Flavia (ex Autoramas) and husband Martin. Kind of like a stripped-down Teengenerate, with the boom-boom-shake of pure garage. The cover pops with self accolades like "Dynamite!" "Killer!" and "Explosive." Totally apt. —Camylle Reynolds (Bachelor)

CRYSTAL METHODIST: *Self-titled*: 7"

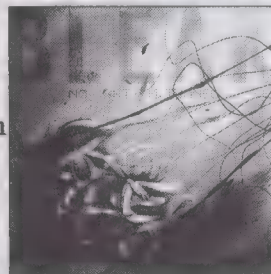
Dammit, I sure fall for a punny band name... Crystal Methodist—straight up HC outta New Hampshire. I didn't even know there was that much to be



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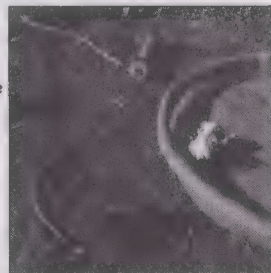
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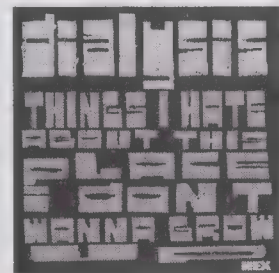
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passed about in NH. Huh, in my old age I would rather lash out directly on the inhumanities I experience on the day to day—hashtag first world problems, yo—instead of wind milling through ■ crowd. Never the less, solid stuff. —Jackie Rusted (Pine Hill)

CYNOSURE: Self-titled: CS

Crazed, jarring stuff very akin to Torches To Rome, even if they never quite reach Sarah Kirsch's sustained ferocity in the vocal department. Still, a very competent, fun blend of screamo and hardcore that would've been right at home on an Ebullition 7". —Keith Rosson (Cynosure)

DAHMERs, THE: Demons: CD

First of all, this band rocks just fine. It's fuzzed-out punk'n'roll with big, catchy choruses. At times, it sounds more like they've listened to the bands that listened to all the cool bands from the '70s, rather than actually listened to all those '70s bands themselves. No big deal, I guess. But this band is called the Dahmers. They have songs about serial killers and slasher movies. In fact, their video for the first song on this album, "Stalker," is a pitch perfect homage to low budget '80s slasher flicks. The tone of this stuff rarely matches the mood the lyrics should be evoking, though. It's a weird juxtaposition, all these murder lyrics in these fist-pumping anthems. Part of me wonders, where's the spooky at, ghoulfriends? But then the rest of me is just like, "Shut up and dance." —MP

Johnson (Lövely, LLYrecords.com / thedahmers.bandcamp.com)

DAHMERs, THE: Terror on Wheels: 7"

Though I've long considered Jeffrey Dahmer to be the most sympathetic of the famous serial killers, Swedish band The Dahmers' choice to utilize the Milwaukee Cannibal's ■■■■ led ■■■ to expect some seriously evil tunes. *Terror on Wheels* kicks off with ■ quote from Roger Corman's 1966 Hell's Angels flick, *The Wild Angels*, in which Peter Fonda demands the freedom to ride bikes without getting "hassled by The Man." When opening track, "The Ripper," starts in earnest, it's... really fun, bouncy garage rock'n'roll with shades of carnival music. "Hit 'n' Run" is more *driving*—ba-dum-ching!—but still features jaunty handclaps to accompany its refrain of "I kill for fun." The third track, "Howling"—which, yes, begins with a howl—is ■ dyed-in-the-wool, '70s-inspired pop rock anthem about making deals with the devil and baying at full moons. The closer, "I Spit on Your Grave," ups the ante with an extra side of menace and ripping guitar antics that balance out its frankly adorable "oo-oo-oo"s. Overall, *Terror on Wheels* is ■ perfect blend of '70s kitsch, horror movie reverence, evil intention, and feel-good garage rock bangers. Their catchy songs may stand in stark contrast to the dark images The Dahmers' moniker evokes, but then again, Jeffrey "I've got to start eating at home more" Dahmer *did* have his own distinctive ■■■■ of whimsy.

—Kelley O'Death (Lövely, order@gaphals.se, LLYrecords.com)

DAKOTA FLOYD: Localities: CD

You almost have to resort to cliché to talk about something as sentimental and sincere as Dakota Floyd's new solo album—his heart is on his sleeve, and he's sweet as sugar. Those who know him from his band, The Wild, will recognize the earnest, confessional lyrical style as well as the unapologetic poppiness, though this is stripped down and straightforward, just Dakota and an acoustic guitar. Walking the line between folk and folk punk, he sings about new crushes at sunrise and the pull of wanderlust over sparkling clean guitar—any fan of that scrappy, unfailingly positive Plan-It-X style can feel at home with *Localities*. —Indiana Laub (Self-released)

DEAFNESS BY NOISE:

■ Long Way Down: CD

First appearing on the European hardcore scene back in 1991, Croatia's Deafness By Noise return with ■ album of the NYHC-inspired sound they have long been known for. The first thing which struck ■■ about *A Long Way Down* ■■■ the nostalgia vibe. The band's album art and imagery of World War Two warplanes and faux military uniforms has a '40s vibe to it, right down to the layout of the lyrics. There are numerous guest appearances on the album, including ■ appearance by Sick Of It All, who ■ also ■ obviously strong influence on the band's overall

sound. Of the guest appearances, Lord Willin's rap on the intro to "All Systems Down" was my favorite. I've always appreciated the connected relationship between the underground music scenes of hardcore and hip hop, and it's nice to see that connection is still alive. *A Long Way Down* is a solid outing by ■ band with ■ long history, but I wouldn't go into this expecting to find anything groundbreaking. —Paul J. Comeau (Strength)

DESCENDENTS:

Hypercaffium Spazzinate: ■■■■

The arrival of ■ new Descendents album is something to celebrate and after the rather inconsistent and lackluster predecessor, *Cool to Be You*, I was craving a return to the musical brilliance that the band has been renowned for. Twelve years is a long time to wait between releases. But the result is well worth it as the sixteen tracks emphasize a renewed high level of songwriting from start to finish and which are clearly produced to allow their energy to burst free. Yes, Milo's voice is showing signs of wear and tear, but it adds ■ new depth to the sound without losing its distinctiveness. A special mention must be given to "No Fat Burger," the antithesis of the classic "I Like Food," as it serves ■ a public health announcement, warning against ■ unhealthy diet. Who would ever have thought that would feature in ■ Descendents song? Despite the huge positives, of which there ■ numerous, one negative looms large over the record


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for many in the U.K. and that is the use of the word "spazz." For decades, this has been used in a derogatory way as the shortened version of "spastic," and whilst acknowledging its different meaning in the U.S.A., it's something I'm uneasy with both in the album's title and the, otherwise excellent, song "Limiter." To some it might be taking political correctness too far, but years of hearing the word used as a slur is hard to forget. That aside, this is an excellent return to form from one of my all-time favorite bands. —Rich Cocksedge (Epitaph, epitaph.com)

DESCENDENTS:

Hypercaffium Spazzinate: LP

Chances are that if you're a regular reader of this zine, you don't need me to tell you who the Descendents are. Even if you're a casual fan, you can agree that their legacy is well deserved. The thought I can't shake while listening to these songs is that this album very well may have never materialized: both bassist Karl Alvarez and drummer Bill Stevenson faced serious health issues between the release of this album and their previous LP, *Cool to Be You*. Fortunately for us, not even death can stop the fortuitous foursome. I hate reading reviews with phrases such as "returning to form" because that would imply that a band like the Descendents has ever lost their way and that simply isn't true. If you're looking for another *Milo Goes to College* or *Everything Sucks*, you're setting yourself up for unrealistic expectations. The truth is

that Descendents never abandoned their roots or went the route of wrongful experimentation with genres and sounds they never really belonged in just to see if they could sell records. They pursued their outside interests (Milo in biochemistry), played in other bands (Bill in Only Crime, three quarters of the band in All) and recorded other punk bands at their own studio the Blasting Room during their down time, all the while honing their edge. To think that they could ever write a bad song is just plain silly. From start to finish, we are beholding yet another future classic album in discography that is already damn near perfect. I can understand if you don't really feel this album or think it's just not that good, but if you honestly think that this album outright sucks then I think there's a good chance that you suck even harder. —Juan Espinosa (Epitaph)

DESTRUCTORS, THE: The Somme: CD

The Somme is an homage to the battle of the same name during World War I. A captivating concept, and it kept me intrigued. The brand of metal The Destructors play is heavily influenced by both rock and punk—and while the backups are gruff at times, the lead vocals are almost spoken and heavily accented, which sort of adds to the charm. —Steve Adamyk (Rowdy Farrago, destructors.co.uk)

DIGITAL LEATHER: Whack Jam: CD

This one threw me for a loop. It was recorded in an attic in Omaha, but

it really doesn't sound lo-fi. The synthesizer is the instrument of choice here. It is quirky but not annoying. Shawn Foree recorded it and drew the picture of the toilet on the front. It is pretty realistic (the picture of the toilet). —Sean Koepenick (Kind Turkey)

DIRECT HIT!: Wasted Mind: CD

Milwaukee's Direct Hit play smooth, poppy punk with complicated and varied songwriting and hyper-melodic motormouth vocals. They bring to mind brainier Fat bands like Propagandhi and Dillinger 4. This is a concept album about drugs. There are songs about flipping out on mushrooms, pissing in cups, sketchy prescription drugs, and losing people to alcoholism, and they all skip by fast until you catch yourself singing, "Take all those pills / Swallow 'em down, take every one / We're all insane / Pay! / The price is brains." Damn. —Chris Terry (Fat)

DIRTIEST, THE: Alarm: 7"

A couple o' Italian cats turn in some sleazy, stinky rock'n'roll. The sounds of oblivious late-night revelry in blissfully dicey parts of town. Thumbs up. —Jimmy Alvarado (Slovenly)

DOPAMINES, THE:

Guided by Voices' Flexi 7"

Hey everyone! The Dopamines are back with a two-song 7" flexi EP! You can bend it and stuff! Neat! The release features a cover of fellow Ohioans Guided By Voices' "Quality of Armor"—thus the witty title!—and the

band's own "Dave Wipfler," originally featured on The Turkletons' 2013 benefit compilation, *Duke*. Guided by Voices is available via It's Alive Records, who also distributed The Dopamines' 2012 full-length, *Vices—holy shit*, the witty title rabbit hole just got deeper! The flexi is packaged with album art aping that of Guided By Voices' 1992 record, *Propeller*, which houses the original version of "Quality of Armor." Basically, we're all being incepted, guys. The Dopamines' cover of the song is predictably and successfully pop punk-ified, with the main difference being that Robert Pollard sounded like he had a sore throat, while Jon Lewis and Jon Weiner sound like they have stuffy noses. "Dave Wipfler" keeps pace, featuring the kind of lovelorn lyrics and almost-harmonies that make pop punk, well, pop punk. A must-have for all Dopamines addicts. —Kelley O'Death (It's Alive)

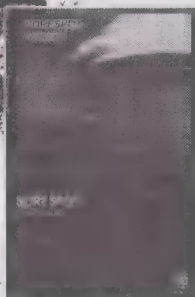
DOWN BY LAW / END OF PIPE:

Equators: Split: CD

Three songs each from both bands. Down By Law's songs have a Stiff Little Fingers feel. "Agents of Sin" even sounds like The Jam in bits and pieces, minus Sam Williams III's rippin' leads (sorry, Weller!). I am pretty sure this is the recorded debut of Noel Bisesti on drums and he hits with studied abandon. Dave Smalley's lyrics always paint a vivid picture, while Kevin Coss's basslines holds it all together. End Of Pipe is from Brazil and sounds like they dig Hot Water

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Sorespot Sewerage

SORESLOT is a CHICAGO 4-piece w/ mbr of CANADIAN RIFLE outputting a unique blend of noisy LO-FI ALT PUNK. Dual female / male vocals take a back seat to loud guitars and catchy melodies. At times more atmospheric, Sorespot's music is a welcomed addition to CHICAGO'S growing list of locals attempting to differentiate.



Bad Mechanics Demo 2015

BAD MECHANICS is a lo-fi scatter-brain punk two piece from CHICAGO made up of former mbrs of GALACTIC CANNIBAL and HEWHOCORRUPTS. Think DEVO, NO MEANS NO, and THEY MIGHT BE GIANTS and you'll probably get something close to BAD MECHANICS. BAD MECHANICS' debut release "DEMO 2015" is a four song demo tape w/ drop card LIMITED TO 100.

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Music. It is not a jarring clash from the first three songs, ■ this feels like a good match. Well played, gentlemen. —Sean Koeppen (Undermusic, undermusicbooking@yahoo.com.br / Spider Merch, lojaspider@gmail.com)

DRAGSTER: Self-titled: 10"

Four chords, one beat, and a lot of feedback. This sounds like if you ate all the bowling balls in the world. Not that I'm complaining, mind you. BEST SONG: "I Can't Feel It." BEST SONG TITLE: "Don't You Know I'm Loco." FANTASTIC AMAZING TRIVIA FACT: Owing to the Old English font, I thought this band's ■■■■■ was "Dragsick" for about half the record. Well, at least I didn't think they were Dirt Bike Annie. —Rev. Nørb (Retard / Frantic City)

DRIVING RAIN:

Intermittent Rain: 12" EP

Stockholm's Driving Rain performs light 1970s-influenced pop, with ■ slight edge from the harder sounds they grew up listening to. This debut six-song EP is pleasant enough, with fantastic production values. It's often suspect when underground musicians ■■ deliberately trying to capture a mainstream sound of the past, but *Intervention Time* is unimposing and relatively fun. Another EP is promised in the ■■■■ future, ■ keep your eyes and ■■■■ peeled. Can ears be peeled? Even Mr. Potato Head's ears aren't quite peelable. Keep your eyes peeled and your ears perked for their next EP,

unless your ears are peelable. —Art Ettinger (Lövely)

DWARVES:

Free Cocaine (7" ■■■■) 2 x LP

Another great Dwarves compilation from Recess Records. The 2016 reissue is ■ double album with gatefold cover, and looking sweet. *Free Cocaine* picks up where *Lick It* left off, shedding their psychedelic persona as Suburban Nightmare and fully embracing what it means to be Dwarves: gritty, trashy hardcore punk rock. Filthy as the day is long. The music on these two slabs of vinyl is the chrysalis stage (or is it pupal? I flunked out of entomology) of the legends that the Dwarves would become. Deranged, demented, and down-right dirty. You can't continue to make engaging music for more than thirty years if there isn't more to the seedy exterior than meets the eye. Recognize! —Ty Stranglehold (Recess)

DWARVES: Lick It (7" ■■■■) 2 x LP

If there is one thing that can be said about the thirty-plus-year-spanning ■■■■ of the Dwarves (outside of the obvious pornography), it is that they have never been afraid to tackle different styles of music (usually with positive results). While most people think of the hardcore punk incarnation of the band as the original, the truth is that long before that, they ■■■■ Suburban Nightmare, ■ Chicago garage/trash rock band in the vein of The Sonics or Fleshtones. Recess Records originally compiled these early recordings back

in 1999, and have now reissued them in ■ swell-looking double LP with a gatefold cover. As usual, Blag, HeWho, and company excel at what they put their mind to. Sure, the recording quality is fuzzy and crappy, but that's kind of how garage rock is supposed to sound, right? An excellent archive to the earliest ■■■■ of what may turn out ■ be the greatest band in American history. —Ty Stranglehold (Recess)

EXTINCT EXIST: Cursed Earth: 12"

One punk's opinion: In the realm of heavy, d-beat hardcore, the pinnacle ■■■■ reached with three consecutive records: *Tragedy's Vengeance* (2002), *From Ashes Rise's Nightmares* (2003), and *Tragedy's Nerve Damage* (2006). Aside from the obviously and epically influential Discharge, everything in this very specific subgenre released previous, concurrent, and subsequent to these masterpieces has paled in comparison, ■ good as ■■■■ of them have been. The songwriting, performance, and production on these three albums achieved a perfection that is still untouchable. But every once in ■ while, you hear a record that gives you pause, reminds you of ■■■■ black-holiest of trinities. *Cursed Earth* is one of those records. That's not to say that it gives any of the three competition. What it does say is that this is ■ quality record: thoughtfully composed songs that ■■■■ you somewhere; thrashing and heavy, yet restrained and acutely intentional in their musical and lyrical journey. As might be expected based

on the title, *Cursed Earth* focuses ■■ environmental destruction, its impact on animal and human life, and the apathy displayed by most of the world toward our imminent doom. "Meanwhile, oblivious to all, the Parisian diner finishes off his steak and politely motions for the bill." A beautifully produced booklet accompanies the record, with a selection of prose such as this, accompanying each song's lyrics. Highly recommended listening for those with any reverence toward the above records. —Chad Williams (Ruin Nation / Aborted Society)

FATTY CAKES AND THE PUFF PASTRIES: Feminist Gold 2K: CS

Remember when there was a lesson to be learned in afterschool specials in the '90s, there would often be an out-of-town person or crew that would appear to either fix the problem or help the kid through the tough time? Well imagine that Virgie Tovar and Gravy Train were commissioned to put together ■ cartoon musical superhero force of femme beauty and rage from the future to fuck up whatever asshole tried to tell ■■ we were less than perfect: *Fatty Cakes And The Puff Pastries* ■■ all of that and more. Serious grrrl gang vibes through punky, poppy, xylophone-driven, anthems about being bad asses, gay sex in the park, golddigging, and hating working in the mall. Everything about this cassette is flawless, from the cover art to those cool bass lines, syncopated hihat grooves, and vocal harmonies. Keep Fresno pissed off,

Mikey Erg
"Tentative Decisions"

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Fatty Cakes. Y'all are doing the lord's work. —Candace Hansen (Self-released)

FACEDOWNINSHIT: *Early Years: CS*

North Carolina's self-proclaimed "Southern fried dirt metal" mavens, Facedowninshit, aren't ones to bury the lead: their name serves as a fine description of the sensation likely to creep up a listener's spine while reveling in the band's heavy-as-fuck offerings. The raw, grimy grooves on their best known album—2006 Relapse release, *NPON (Nothing Positive Only Negative)*—seduced diehard extreme metal fans who preferred their sludge a little swampy. Their new cassette, *Early Years*—a collection of not-demos, splits, and early, likely out-of-print material—is predictably less cohesive than *NPON*, but delivers similarly ugly joys. Crushing metallic chaos flirts with Southern rock riffs, fuck-yeah thrash licks, and even some moody donning-corpse-paint-and-brooding-in-a-forest interludes, though the songs don't linger too long on any one idea. Unavailable in digital formats, the quality of one's cassette player will dictate whether the more frenzied arrangements sound like visionary opuses of filth or your neighbors cutting down the tree in their front yard while you're trying to sleep. Either way, the experimental, rough around the edges feeling of *Early Years* is also the source of its charm. The B-side is probably cool too, but my tape deck eviscerated the cassette before I could find out for sure—fucking brutal. —Kelley O'Death (PATAC)

FLYING CIRCLES: *Loving Grace: CD*

Flying Circles makes meandering, mid-tempo soft rock, a genre I mention mostly because the first band this cassette made me think of was Fleetwood Mac. The vocals are richer and more contemporary than Stevie's, of course, but there's a similar meditative darkness that pervades these pretty songs, which are guitar-driven but also feature pianos and theremins and choral backup vocals. They sound like a plugged-in Alela Diane with guitar solos and moody basslines. It's frankly an impeccable cassette. —Lyle (Antiquated Future)

FULL SUN: *Stick It: CD*

A solid take on that Thin Lizzy-infused riffy power pop that punk bands have been turning out lately. Clean and tight with a well-honed edge of fuzz. I can't imagine listening to this anything but cassette. "Nebulous," the stand-out opening track, could be blasting out of the windows of a beat-up Buick in a "finally breaking outta this town" scene. Pretty cool. —Indiana Laub (Let's Pretend)

FUR COATS: *Short Brain: 7"*

The Fur Coats are kicking it out like it's still 1995. Fast, catchy pop punk that hinges on your taste in vocals. They're divisive; it's either love or hate. Fumbling around, I began to search my brain for vocals to liken Marc's to for a reference point. Smoking Popes and No Empathy popped in. Throw on No Empathy's "Ben Weasel Don't Like It"

7" and there it is in the intro vignette: "Hi Ben, it's me Marc Ruvalo..." So there's that. Comfortable and catchy enough to trigger twenty-year-old memory. Good stuff. Monster brain lime green vinyl. —Matt Seward (Rad Girlfriend, radgirlfriendrecords.com)

FUTURE PUNK: *This Is Punk: Wave LP*

Synth-pop new wave stuff that reminded me—to get really obscure—of an early '80s group called Transport, but you could probably go with the obligatory "dance-oriented, Devo-inspired wavo tuneage" and not be too far off the mark. The kinda "punk" music that'll likely burn out yer staunchest punker pals. Me likey. —Jimmy Alvarado (Adagio 830)

GHOST ON TAPE: *Ignoring All*

Traffic Lights: 7" EP

Mix of pop and Modern Action-type anthem punk. The vocals take a bit of getting used to, but the songs themselves are catchy and well produced. —Jimmy Alvarado (Brassneck)

GIZ MEDIUM: *Are We There Yet?: CS*

Surprised that folk punk is still being made; however, given that folk punk is still around, I'm not surprised that it's being made poorly. Cards on the table, I find folk punk generally unbearable. Typically, folk punk sounds like shitty camp songs with lyrical content that reads like diary excerpts from an uptight and uncreative college-aged hippie. Giz Medium did nothing to change my generalized perception of

the genre. While there are a couple songs that have a full band sound, this cassette is mostly just crooning with a guitar, trying too hard to be heartfelt. For fans of Ghost Mice (if there are any). —Vincent (busstoppress.bandcamp.com)

GLEAM GARDEN / TONY'S BITE:

Split: CD

This glorious split features two of Japan's finest! Kumagaya's Gleam Garden and equal parts heart and teeth. The first of their five songs for side A, "Wasting Time," channels The Pillows if they played post-hardcore, at once pop and punk and garage and indie and undefinable. "Vision in White" is similarly upbeat and catchy, but with a palpable undercurrent of youthful frustration and ennui that prevents it from becoming cloying. "Spring Storm" somehow introduces both a hint of twang and a swinging doo-wop beat without stepping on its own feet, and "Last Exit" goes deeper down the rabbit hole of garagey roughness, while preserving the dreamy pop emotion Gleam Garden express so well. The final track, a cover of Bobby Bland's 1961 ballad, "I'm Not Ashamed," is a satisfying crystallization of the early '60s influences lurking beneath the surface of the four previous songs. Its borrowed lyrics perfectly recall the bittersweetness that defined much of the era's pop music, while the band's loose, relaxed playing makes it feel fresh. Side B is inhabited by six raucous songs from Toyama's Tony's Bite, who

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"These are the kinds of songs that become around in my head on a regular basis. If I was at all able to play a guitar, I think I would write songs in the same vein as Bum Out. They're quick and catchy with a lot of heart!"
—PAZZ/BOP

<https://bumout.bandcamp.com>
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=...>

lean hard into their classic punk roots while exploring post-punk tones and textures ■ the opener, "No Reply." "Rough Fight" is aptly titled, ■ rowdy rock'n'roll anthem for delinquents. The bouncy, spacey "Primitive Eye" lightens the mood a bit, while "Right Thing" gently shreds your face with its killer riffs. Tony's Bite cram the largest amount of attitude into their shortest song, the barely one-minute "Virgin Soil," creating side B's standout track. Finisher, "I'm Empty," is ■ cover of fellow Toyama band, Sub Stream, ending the whole fun affair on a high note you can't help but dance to. —Kelley O'Death (Snuffy Smiles / Brassneck)

GLITTER WIZARD: "Life Under Traffic" b/w "Circle of Kings": 7"

I have ■ idea what ■ Glitter Wizard is but I'm into this band. It's like Black Sabbath married a cheesy, one-hit band that gave ■ "I Believe in a Thing Called Love." So, it's ■ little confusing but it's a mix of sludgy metal and psych rock and it's great. —Nicole X (Rock & Rule, goblincomegamall.com/collections/rock-rule-records)

G.L.O.S.S: Trans Day of Revenge: 7"

Not everyone wants to listen to the message of Olympia's G.L.O.S.S. It doesn't paint a beautiful world and it surely doesn't call for ■ peaceful way of walking in it. But then you remember that this was released the day after one of the biggest ■■ shootings in U.S. history, at ■ queer nightclub, and

days before another unarmed person of color was killed by ■ police officer. So, yeah, lyrics like "Black lives don't matter in the eyes of the law" and "Black trans women / Draped in white sheets / Beaten to death / Harassed by police... / Trans day of revenge / Not ■ weak ■ we seem," are undeniably timely and telling. You can't put the message outside of the music here and that's what makes it what it is. I'll go ahead and state the obvious: the music is really, really, good. If you miss old school, East Coast hardcore, this is for you. But don't expect pure repetition. G.L.O.S.S is not here to reinvent any wheels, they're moving beyond the notion entirely. —Nicole X (Total Negativity / Nervous Nelly)

GURR: Furry Dream: 12" EP

Imagine a lo-fi, poppy garage rock version of the Dum Dum Girls and you might have something in the vicinity of Gurr. The songs ■ quick and catchy and fun, and my only complaint is that this EP blazes by and is over before you know it. A recent tour with Bleached seems like ■ good fit, and with ■ new LP on the horizon, I would imagine ■■ big things are likely in store for Gurr. —Mark Twistworthy (Asset, assetdiscos.com)

HARRY CLOUD: Harry Cloud's After School Special: CD

Holy eclecticism! These seven songs by singer-songwriter Harry Cloud run the gamut from sludgy black metal to creepy electronica to '70s good-timey

Bay City Rollers sounds. I like them all for the most part, even the fascinating reinterpretation of Aerosmith's "Janie's Got a Gun," whose original is in the running for worst song ever, but this one is not. There is little or ■ way to pigeon hole this one, and, in large part, that's what makes this work. —The Lord Kveldulfr (White Worm)

HEAVY DRAPES: Should I Suck Or Should I Blow: CDEP

Ex-members of the U.K.'s Baby's Got A Gun doing traditional, '77-style punk. "I Wanna Be Maladjusted" is the standout here, for sure. Well done. —Steve Adamyk (Tarbeach, facebook.com/heavydrapes)

HELLSTOMPER:

One Take, Motherfuckers: CD

It took ■ little while, but ANTISEEN ultimately inspired enough bands that The Confederacy of Scum was born. One of the best of those acts, if not the best, was Hellstomper. More country than most of the other C.O.S. acts, Hellstomper exploded onto the scene with a bunch of releases before seemingly calling it a day. Fans were elated ■ few years back when they returned, hitting the road for a bunch of fantastic live performances. This release displays Hellstomper live, or "live ■ hell," ■ the sleeve promises. Recorded in the same four cities ■ Kiss Alive, this recording shows that Hellstomper knows how to command ■ stage. Hits like "Suicide," "Pabst Blue Ribbon," and "Haulin' Ass" ■■

included, ■■ several other classics. Singer Alan King is ■ true original, with ■ better backing band than ever. Make sure to check them out if you have the chance, and keep your fingers crossed for more stellar Hellstomper releases in the future. —Art Ettinger (Zodiac Killer)

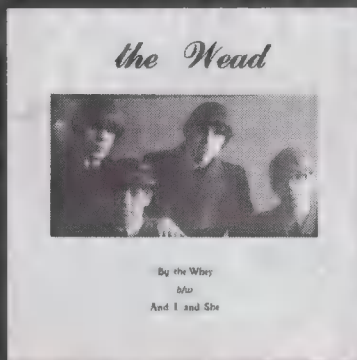
HERO DISHONEST: Liha Ja Teräs: LP

A bunch of old dudes from Finland who never got out of or grew tired of hardcore punk belt out yet another full length (their seventh) with the intensity of kids half their age. Brings back fond memories of Tear It Up, What Happens Next?, Life's Halt, E-150, and other classic turn of the century hardcore bands. Judging by the band photo, they fully endorse squash, Sriracha hot sauce, cats, whiskey, and fuzz distortion pedals. Also, if you're ever in Finland ask these guys about Megapussi chips and where you ■■ purchase some. —Juan Espinosa (Peterwalkee)

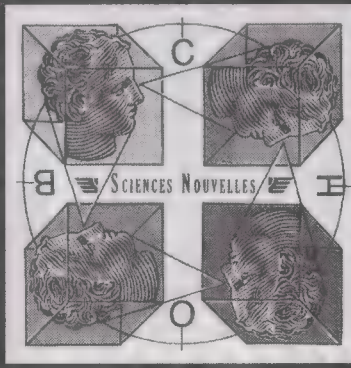
HIGHRIDER: Armageddon Rock: CD

What makes a heavy metal/hard rock band epic? Highrider's attempt to answer that question consists of equal parts keyboards and nihilism. Bass, drums, and guitar all figure prominently in the shaping of Highrider's sound, but the addition of keyboardist Christopher Ekendahl pounding the ivories pushes the band over the top. His inclusion never sounds gimmicky or forced. Whether coming front and center for leads, or acting as rhythm and back support for guitarist Eric Rådegård's

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furious riffing, Ekendahl is such an integral part of the vibe of Highrider that it's impossible to imagine the band's sound without him. This could easily be the soundtrack to a badass sci-fi adventure movie, and it will certainly play a large part in my fall driving soundtrack. Epic, indeed. —Paul J. Comeau (The Sign)

HOOPER / SPELLS: Split: CS

This is the 126th release from Denver label Snappy Little Numbers, if the numbering is accurate. This split cassette features two Denver bands, playing two songs each, and is available on two colors of cassette (one for each band). Hooper sounded a bit stale musically, but their vocalist had a dynamic range that I appreciated. I found Spells more interesting. Their backing vocal harmonies in "A Failure's Wake," helped make that song the strongest on the cassette. The Spells tracks were from the recording session as a forthcoming LP, and I'll be giving that a listen soon as it's available. —Paul J. Comeau (Snappy Little Numbers)

HOT MASS: Nervous Tensions: LP

Man, rough one. One of those things where everything seems solid at first, but just fails to really catch, you know? I want all the pieces to lock into place more than they do, and the end result should, by all accounts, be right up my alley. Punk stuff that's upbeat and nuanced and just a little bit off, melodically and structurally.

The catchiness of the Copyrights tempered by the herky-jerky structures of older Plow United's weird hardcore/post-punk moments, maybe. I mean, that comparison sounds impervious to harm, right? And yet in spite of the sometimes feverish tempos, the wonderful packaging, the beautiful vinyl, the recording quality... I've listened to this thing at least half a dozen times and it's yet to really hit home, you know? —Keith Rosson (Brassneck, brassneckrecords.bigcartel.com / All In Vinyl, allinviny.com / Waterslide, watersliderecords.com)

HOT MASS: Nervous Tensions: LP

This relatively new Welsh band has created a record which, after just a handful of plays, has become indelibly stuck in my head. The ten tracks feature some memorable intros and outros bookending the guts of songs in which the rhythm guitar provides the necessary propulsion whilst frequently attacked by a trebly lead scratching angrily away. *Nervous Tensions* rocks and it does so in a way which has the same melodic thrust that many bands from Chicago have used to good effect over the years. To top it all off, this was the soundtrack of my trip to France to watch Wales defeat Belgium in the Euro 2016 Quarter Final, one of the greatest experiences of my fifty years on this planet. This is the perfect album to associate with a once-in-a-lifetime event. —Rich Cockedge (Brassneck, brassneckrecords.bigcartel.com / All In Vinyl, allinviny.com / Waterslide, watersliderecords.com)

HOWARDIAN: A Smurf at Land's End: CS

Not quite unlistenable but definitely not enjoyable, Ian Vanek of Japanther's side project, Howardian, sets out to confuse. Cheese-tastic synths prance over primitive beats while some white guy spouts out nonsensical, sing-song raps. *A Smurf at Land's End* is basically like *Mellow Gold*'s annoying, less talented little brother. Go home, Howardian. —Simone Carter (Let's Pretend)

HUNCHES, THE: Self-titled: CD

This four piece from Portland, OR disbanded in 2009 after nearly a decade and several releases. However, this self-titled record from 2001 hasn't seen the light of day until now. The reincarnated spirit of Stiv Bators lives inside The Hunches' singer Hart Geldhill and resonates just like a caged animal that's been cooped up far too long. His range goes from raspy melodic singing to a fierce, ear-shattering growl. Musically, this band is garagey with lo-fi production that fits all too well. They embody the era of sound when rock music got the "punk" qualifier prepended to it. Appropriately, the lyrics match the style perfectly. Shouts of, "I'm gonna break her heart cus I just wanna dance alone / Won't ya leave me alone baby?" perpetuate throughout the tune. There's also a beautiful bridge riff that sounds just like a track from The Nervs. Most obvious comparison is Dead Boys, though there are some mid-tempo New York Dolls type songs as well. Heavily influenced by late

'70s proto punk and rock'n'roll, it's a shame that this album is unavailable for so long. But it's here now, so don't snooze! —Kayla Greet (Almost Ready)

HUNGER ANTHEM: Cut the Chord: CDEP

Indie three-piece from Athens, Ga. that kicks up a racket. They are hard to classify, as the styles shift from song to song. I hear some Dinosaur Jr. mixed in with a bit of Bar-B-Q Killers around the edges. Intriguing. —Sean Koepenick (Broken Brain)

HUNT: Branches: CD

As luck would have it, this is the fourth Swedish band I've reviewed in just as many issues. Previously, I enjoyed Hurula, Vänna Inget, and Terrible Feelings, all of which have since been on constant rotation. Hunt is no exception. They wash over you with brooding minimalism; tickling your eardrums with ethereal vocals, plodding bass lines, and thumping drum toms. Unlike other contemporary shoegaze and dream pop groups, Hunt's production demands headphones and deep introspection—a willingness to disappear into the sound for an evening. Like Slowdive and Mazzy Star, the songs are dense, sonically wrapping you up in their intimate melodies. When the intro of "Not Sorry" kicks in, I get goose bumps from the fuzzy guitar lick. My single complaint is that there are only eight songs, two of which are instrumentals. Thirty minutes isn't enough time to completely disappear. —Sean Arenas (Lövely, llyrecords.com)



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Odd time signatures, heavy dynamics, rock guitar fuddling bits, and melodramatic vocals. Today's post-hardcore is yesterday's emo. —Jimmy Alvarado (If It Kills You, facebook.com/iftkillsyou)

Bullet in My Heart: 7"

Dunno much about these cats, and thus far my exposure to them has been limited. This is something I seriously need to rectify 'cause nearly everything I've come across by them I've straight-up adored, and this is no exception. Both tracks here are blessed with the sweet-spot mix of punk and power pop that made bands like The Undertones and The Plimsouls so goddamned crucial—driving beats pounding in simple but potent hooks and choruses that insist you sing along whether you want to or not. Glad this is out in the world again for punters like me who missed out the first time to find and fall in love with. —Jimmy Alvarado (Last Laugh, almostreadyrecords.com)

So Live, So Devastating:

I'm normally very leery of live releases; they **seem** to be generated out of a need for a quick release, but, **more** importantly, the sound quality usually sucks. Having moved away from my beloved Milwaukee before these dudes ever formed there, this is my first exposure to them, and I was not disappointed. Contrary to

my expectations, the sound quality is actually pretty darn good, *and* I liked the tunes. Victory all the way around for Indonesian Junk! It would be easy to toss them into the power pop barrel, but there's too much traditional rock'n'roll influence carousing through the band's set to warrant such categorization. I could **■** put them **■** on the bill with any of Duane Peters' bands and having it be **■** night to tell your grandkids about. The Bandcamp site says that it will come with **■** digital download, but as I write this only two copies are remaining. -The Lord Kveldulfr (No address listed)

Cry, Cry, Cry: CD

Do you like the Ramones? Do you wear leather at least once a week? Can you get down with some cool keyboard sprinkled into rock'n'roll? If you answered yes to any of the aforementioned, Invisible Teardrops are probably a band you can get into. Classic downstrokey rock'n'roll here. They even do that cool '70s fade in/fadeout thing between tracks. Bet it sounds even better on vinyl. —Candace Hansen (Arkam. arkamrecords.net)

Kenan Oikeus?: 7" EP

Finnish hardcore with a sound reminiscent of bands coming outta that ■■■ in the very early '80s. Things are kept in second gear, churning and growly rather than going full-bore and wild. Good stuff. —Jimmy

Alvarado (Kadotettu Tulesvaisuus,
kadotettutulevaisuus@gmail.com)

Early Hüsker Dü under the influence of mind-altering substances. There are moments when the songs creep up from behind you and grab you by the throat but then just sort of leave you in suspense. The final song on this record is where things get a little more interesting, but even then the vocals are so soft to complement the intensity of the music. Had some really high expectations for this one, but Korga Works has had a pretty solid track record up until now. The artwork is magnificent, however. —Juan Espinosa (Korga Works)

Killer Kane is, of course, the former bassist for the New York Dolls. The band is a short-lived venture out together by Kane and his buddy, a pre-W.A.S.P. Blackie (Goozeman) Lawless, and this is ■ repress of their single, originally released by Whiplash Records in 1976. The A-side, "Mr. Cool," sounds like something straight out of Alice Cooper's oeuvre, the influence of "I'm Eighteen" just dropping off it. The two tracks ■ the flip, "Longhaired Woman," and "Don't Need You," are ■ bit more uptempo with ■ Dollsy swagger. A nice testament for ■ "lost" band, cleaned up and remastered all nice and purty by the band's guitarist, Andy Jay. -Jimmy Alvarado (HoZac. hozacrecords.com)

I have to say that sometimes I am challenged by reviewing some European punk, ■ so much of what I come across is what I would call “professional punk”—bands that come loaded with corporate sponsors, big festivals, tour shirts, and sound ready for corporate alt-rock radio. I guess I get it. Things ■ just done differently in Europe, right? Well, now I set you up, it won't be a surprise that I put these guys from Valencia, Spain in that camp. This is very slickly produced and totally well done, which, for me, is the problem here. In keeping with the time-honored rock tradition of including a “bonus track,” one is included here, suspicious in that the first five songs of this six song CD totaled maybe thirteen minutes, so I am not sure what the bonus is, exactly. —Garrett Barnwell (Morning Wood)

The Silent Hound: CS

The self-described experimental pop folk duo Kleinerwasserbär consists of Jon Meador (cello, guitars, piano, vocals) and Richard Wehrenberg, Jr. (guitars, keyboards, piano, vocals). There is an almost deliberate lo-fi vibe to this recording, but all the instruments and vocals are very clear. Kleinerwasserbär's sound is very chill and mellow, but has a strength to it that held my attention. I think it's the prominence of Meador and Wehrenberg, Jr.'s vocals at the front of the mix. When you crank the volume

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on this, you get the feeling that they are right there in the room with you. Not the sort of thing that I usually get down with, but I really dig it. —Paul J. Comeau (Let's Pretend)

KNOW SECRETS: At Rise: LP

A "supergroup" effort, apparently—twenty folks from the Bay Area punk/hardcore scene get together to kick up some dust. There's a heavy mid/late-'80s feel to here, not in a dated way but more in reference to an experimental period during the greater punk scene's storied history when musicians (well, the ones who didn't opt to take a stab at the metal brass ring) became proficient enough to wanna try different things. Very early DC-emo is an easy reference point, but there are also some almost tribal rhythmic sensibilities, pop, art-rock, rock and—yes—punk/hardcore influences regularly popping up in the proceedings. Creative and consistently on-point, this hits deftly its mark. —Jimmy Alvarado (301 Collective, facebook.com/301collective)

NOVAH NISVAA

Pinetaskout: 7"

Don't let the (thankfully brief) metallic intro to the first song throw ye off, 'cause shit gets serious right quick once that's over with. Four tracks of wild and fast Finnish thrash that muss up yer noggin and out the door before you know what hit ye. Definitely not for the faint of heart. —Jimmy Alvarado (Svart, svartrecords.com)

LI.: On Corner: LP

Loose, gritty bashing finds a home on the thin line between the sleazy side of punk and the garage-leaning end of hardcore. The lack of refinement in the delivery serves the overall sound well, with just enough cohesion to keep it from sounding like a formless mess, but not so much that one can't almost feel the grime dripping off the tunes. —Jimmy Alvarado (Deranged)

LEECHES, THE: On the Line: CD

Sounds like a dead ringer for *Kill by Remote Control*-era Toxic Reasons in spots; in other patches, it sounds like rock-and-rolly DOA, with occasional piano banging and even organ (I think it's a pancreas). The band is Italian singing in English, which gives it a bit of occasional off-kilter lilt, but ya gotta do what ya gotta do. I've spent twenty-seven worse minutes. BEST SONG: "Like It Happened Before," or maybe even "Feral Child." BEST SONG TITLE: "Apes Approved" FANTASTIC AMAZING TRIVIA FACT: Their guitar player's is "Mexicano." —Rev. Nørb (Nextpunk, nextpunk.ch)

LEISURE WORLD: Demo: CS

Look, I into basically any heavy record that starts with screeching, but there is something really special about this one. Leisure World is like a punker Pissed Jeans that did their homework in school instead of just smoking pot all day. Creative guitar and bass interplay mixed with heavy and smart drum

parts make this exciting to listen to, and those classic pissed punk don't hurt either. Cool cover artwork by DIY comic book artist Abraham Diaz from Mexico City. Probably the most nerdy and aggro shit coming out of Orange County right now, also the only all-dude band on full rotation in my house this summer. —Candace Hansen (Self-released, leisure-world.bandcamp.com)

LOA HEX: Orphan Cuts: LP

This female-fronted hard rock band sounds like they've played every edgy rock club in every police procedural show ever. —Vincent (WFBRecords)

LOVELY LITTLE GIRLS:

Glistening Vivid Splash: CD

Like a welcome nightmare, *Glistening Vivid Splash* is a twisted symphony of pornographic gore. Comprised of nine members (three of whom are vocalists), Lovely Little Girls sets out to stun its listeners into submission with heavy doses of horns and lyrical flogging. Equal parts jazz, prog, and avant-garde, this horde of provocateurs revels in disturbing the peace. A horrible marvel of an album, *Glistening Vivid Splash* is kind of like Frankenstein's monster: it's proof of man's capacity for brilliance, but scary as all hell. —Simone Carter (Skin Graft)

LOVESORES: Roll and Roll Animal: 10"

Scott Drake brings his Deluxe Rock Humping to bear on a quartet of tunes that sound like they could have been

Sleaze Sisters numbers from the *Times Square* movie, or maybe in a scene on a TV show where some freaky-looking punk band rips up a nightclub. The Queen Haters? Pain? I can't quite put my finger up it, but I know it wears a dog collar. "The moon is full of shit tonight" is clearly pretty much the best line anyone wrote, ever. No truth to the rumour the next record is going to be called *Sally Can't Dance*. When do I throw the toilet paper? BEST SONG: "This Wicked World." BEST SONG TITLE: "The Erotic Adventures of Coca-Cola Jones." FANTASTIC AMAZING TRIVIA FACT: Runoff grooves say "THE NUGGETS OF TOMORROW UNEARTHED TODAY," and it's on both sides so you know it must be true. —Rev. Nørb (Hound Gawd)

LUMPS: Curses: CD

This record is friggin' great. Lumps have a late mid-'60s garage-y sound akin to the Animals (maybe that's the bass talking) knocking heads simultaneously with a mid-'80s Minneapolis vibe with a dash of hardcore thrown into the pot for flavor. Very much in line with the Woggles and early stuff by the Makers, but the songwriting is more polished and sophisticated. And then at times Lumps offer up sonic flamethrowers that burn your world to the ground. This is an almost perfect example of a band having the "Estrus sound" while not on Estrus. Loved it. —The Lord Kveldulfr (King Pizza)



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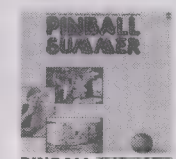
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**M.O.T.O. / PERTTI KURIKAN
NIMIPÄIVÄT: Split LP**

M.O.T.O.: Obviously masterful rock'n'roll. Paul C. has had his attack honed in for going on four decades now, and the four tracks on the M.O.T.O. side of this record show that his edge hasn't dulled. Long gone seem the lo-fi four-track recordings, but the content of the songs is still present. Straightforward punk rock'n'roll with lyrics about rocking, rolling, dying, and how you need a knee to the groin. Indeed! PKN: If you had played this for me without telling me anything about it, I woulda thought that it was some lost relic from the '80s, probably from Brazil (Olho Seco was coming to mind). As it turns out, PKN is a current Finnish band, compromised of four adult men living with developmental disabilities. As it also turns out, I don't know my ass from my elbow when it comes to Finnish punk (or, apparently, Brazilian punk). My ignorance aside, the three tracks contained herein are pretty good, straightforward punk stompers. The vocals are aggressive enough to be hardcore, and the music, too, is crude and aggressive; however, the tempo keeps them firmly on the punk side of the line. The lyrics are in Finnish, so I have no idea what they are singing about, but I'd like to imagine that they sing about throwing pickled fish at political figures. Not too shabby. —Vincent (Blast Of Silence)

**MARTHA:
Blisters In the Pit of My Heart LP**

Martha's debut LP, *Courting Strong*, left an undeniable impact on me. It's filled with painfully, jaw-droppingly relatable odes to being lonely without resentment, and understanding and accepting one's personal sadness. The lyrics burnt off the haze of denial I had found myself in, and I learned the answers to questions I hadn't been capable of asking. It's a powerful record. And one that seemed very hard to top, which is why I wasn't sure if I was ready for another Martha LP in my life. Luckily, the summer of 2016 brings us *Blisters in the Pit of My Heart*, and it's as potent and emotionally relevant as anyone could hope for. It's jam packed with their high-energy, supercharged take on British indie pop. Quirky existentialism (which is the best form of existentialism) is propped up by these grand, immaculately structured pop songs that are the scene for tales of loss, loving, and coming to terms with the unfortunate realities of all face. Radical politics are casually tucked in to love songs; love songs about revolutionary leaders are open in plain sight. *Blisters...* is a solid fucking record. An important record. An inclusive record. A record that can be enjoyed on many levels. The final track feels so touching; it's as if they wrote it with each and every one of us in mind. Martha is as relentless as any great hardcore band, yet trades blastbeats and mosh breakdowns in for multi-vocal melodies and laconic

moments of personal reflection. They're our reminder that it's alright to be moody and self-indulgent, but for the love of god, we need to care about things other than ourselves in this world. You will be coming of age till the day you die; never stop growing, never stop listening. Read the lyrics. —Daryl (Dirtnap)

**MAX AND THE MAKEUPS:
Chasing the Monsters: LP**

A collection of rarities by an obscure Austin group active in the early '80s and has some interesting ties to Junkyard and a few other bands older folks might know by name. The sound is a bit more on the "rock" side of the new wave, clean yet quirky enough to ensure mainstream radio was not gonna come calling. Jerky teen Jimmy circa 1983 would've likely sneered at such blatant wimpiness, but older, more esoteric Jimmy finds appreciation in the musicianship and attempts to do something a bit different. —Jimmy Alvarado (Puke N Vomit, pukenvomitrecords.com)

MDC: Metal Devil Cokes: LP

When I was a teenager thirty years ago MDC were one of my favorite bands. I would buy up any record they put out and know the lyrics to the record back to front within a week. Their first is their best, but the subsequent outings still had their moments. For some reason, I never bought *Metal Devil Cokes* when it was first released. Friends had it, and I would listen and

listen, waiting for the moment where I would go, "Oh yeah, everything is still awesome in the land of hardcore." But it never really clicked. Lyrically it's still MDC, though not as consistently strong and the playing is less focused and less fired up. Some of the songs run way too long and sound like they begin to wander, like "Three Blind Mice," (which could be a really great song if they edited it down a bit) and the title track, a couple of examples. There are some decent songs on here, like "Dirty Harry for President," "I Was a Dupe for the RCP," "Snuffed Out," and "Deep in the Heart (of Racist Amerikkka)" (a song that's very relevant today). Definitely not their best, but it has its moments. This one is for completists and those out there who will take the time and let it grow on them. —Matt Average (Beer City)

MIGHTY SPHINCTER: Undead in Hammersmith 1987: LP

According to a *Phoenix New Times* article, this was actually recorded in Atlanta, not the venerable London venue referenced in the title, which should come as no surprise to anyone familiar with the band's intentionally inaccurate historical record. What's important, though, is that this is an acesounding recording of the band's later post-Ron Reckless lineup, meaning it's a bit more gloomy and less steeped in the psychosis that became their early trademark. The sound, which allegedly lived solely on a cassette for decades, is amazing; the musicianship is top notch,

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MOMENT: Thick and Unwieldy from *Our Layers: A Complete Discography*: 2 LP

I fucking love this. Double album capturing this Boston band's discography—a perfect snapshot of a time and place. Never even heard of those folks before, but goddamn if they don't encapsulate the late '90s/early '00s so perfectly. A wonderful mishmash of emo and punk that was so prevalent at the time, but also damn hard to pull off convincingly. Brings to mind elements of their contemporaries: Hot Water Music, Lifetime, Grade. Letterpress insert, lyrics, photos included. Remastered and sounds gorgeous. I only wish there was more info here—where the songs came from, a release history, anecdotes from band members, etcetera. It's so clearly a labor of love, just wish they'd used it to celebrate a bit more. This is your time to shine, guys! I read some liner notes! Regardless of the skimpiness of info presented, this thing is going to spin round and round in this house. Beautiful, beautiful work; I hope everyone involved high fives the crap out of each other. —Keith Rosson (Tor Johnson)

MYAKKA! Demo: CS

Myakka is galloping, inky black cloud of hardcore from Tallahassee.

The packaging is pretty mysterious, but someone wrote, "Anarchy/Nihilism — The end is near..." inside the j-card, which up the vibe perfectly. Speaking of ends being near, this highly satisfying stack o' jams is done in about eight minutes. —Chris Terry (deathpoem.bigcartel.com)

NEGATIVE STANDARDS: *Fetters*: LP

Negative Standards provide the background music to your deepest, darkest thoughts of mortality, meaning, and neurosis. Excruciatingly beautiful and nihilistic lyrics growl, drag, and beat you to submission. Dark and brutally churning breakdowns, relentless d-beat insanity, and sample-heavy tracks make up this sludgy black metal. Superb. —Camylle Reynolds (Vendetta)

NEW JUNK CITY / ROBOT (RE)PAIR: Split: 7"

I listen to New Junk City's full length all the time. I seriously love it, and thusly approached this record with a mix of eagerness and trepidation. Needless to say, this split continues their earnest, almost Americana-tinged punk that's simultaneously endearing shit and terrifically ragged. This is such a great band. Robot (Re)pair was a nice surprise: super fun, bone-simple, scrappy buzzsaw punk that would've been right at home on a Lookout 7". Like a less cloying Fun Bug, or one of the better Invalids records. When they sing, "Life is pain" or "Weird World," it's like, *Yeah, it is, guys. But somehow the acknowledgment makes it*

little better. Solid cover art by Jason Lubrano closes it out. Great record. —Keith Rosson (Night Animal)

NIGHT WITCH: Self-titled: LP

Part hardcore, part thrash, and all the rage and anger that fit in a tiny, plastic cassette. This cassette, this band, fucking rules. From Tallahassee, Fla., Night Witch is coming fast and hard out of the south to let you know how they feel and they don't care if it puts you off. Vocalist Rosie Richeson hurls feminist and liberation politics right between your eyes in songs that clock in at an average of forty seconds. The label, Total Negativity, is run by Jake from G.L.O.S.S.—if you are on that high right now, as you should be. Night Witch are doing their own thing and I'm glad I get to be affected by it. —Jon Muie (Total Negativity)

NO PERSON: *America*: CD

If I was going to be alliterative, I'd say that No Person play passionate political Pittsburgh punk. It would be one hundred percent true, but it would ignore how the singer sometimes sounds like Thomas Barnett from Strike Anywhere, or that they hit a few squatter-friendly ska grooves à la Culture Shock or The Clash without being cheesy. Solid and timeless. —Chris Terry (Self-released)

NOBODYS / THE RAGING NATHANS: Split: 7"

More lewd and crude pop punk rock'n'roll from the Nobodys, their

first new material in fifteen years. The songs are okay; pretty ho-hum really, and the recording doesn't help. The sound is far too clean, especially for a band that has always traded on the sleazier side of pop punk. The winner of this split, by far, is The Raging Nathans, a band that's new to me. With a much punchier recording, these guys fit right in with their modern pop punk brethren in sound, style, and lyrical content. Fans of Teenage Bottlerocket, The Copyrights, and the Dopamines will dig this. —Chad Williams (Rad Girlfriend, radgirlfriendrecords.com)

OBN III's: *"Rich Old White Men" b/w "On the Verge of Collapse": 7"*

OBN III's continues to scorch a path from the swaggering fuck-you-punk (think The Humpers) of their early releases towards the muscular guitar heroics of Sonic's Rendezvous Band to their more recent output. OBN III's have been trending the Detroit way since 2014's *Third Time to Harm LP*, where front man and band namesake Orville Neely strapped on his guitar and dialed down his crowd-baiting antics. If anyone needs further evidence of OBN III's worship at the altar of SRB, I even see members of the band play an SRB cover set. Both songs on this 7" are powerful, with a low end that doesn't just punch, but kicks its way off your turntable. The vocals seem somewhat low in the mix so I have a hard time making out the words, but overall, another fine release from OBN III's and 12XU. —Sal Lucci (12XU)



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OLD LINES / WILL POTTER:

To **Build** ■ Fire: Split: 7"

I was already ■ fan of Old Lines before this release. *To Build a Fire* only increased my appreciation for the band. I dig the band's riffs, tight song structures, strong political lyrics, and the ferocious intensity of their delivery, both live and on recording. Investigative journalist Will Potter is ■ TED Fellow, and the award winning author of *Green Is the New Red*, a book which explores how the government increasingly treats animal rights and environmental activists ■ terrorists. *To Build a Fire* is less of ■ split and more of a collaboration. Old Lines shreds two classics in the vein of what I've come to love them for, and Potter delivers two rousing spoken word pieces that will make listeners pause. Side A opens with "Hypothermia" by Old Lines, and leads seamlessly into Potter's "Paradoxical Undressing." Each piece reflects the other in theme and subject matter, showing the closeness with which Potter and the band worked. The two pieces address government surveillance and the steady chilling of free speech in the United States. Side B opens with Potter's "Compassion Fatigue," which addresses the helplessness many social justice activists—myself included—have felt at times, but Potter turns the story around into an unexpected call to action. Old Lines' track "You Lie Like ■ Corpse," follows and kicks up the intensity. The lyrics and title play on a quote from Potter's piece. The

emotional impact of the two together will give you goose bumps. Punks everywhere need to hear this record not just because it's ■ damn catchy, but because the message is so important. —Paul J. Comeau (Life Advice)

OLD LINES / WILL POTTER:

To **Build** ■ Fire: Split: 7"

This split is interesting (although is it technically ■ split if one artist is ■ guy who's in the other band?): Will Potter delivers ■ literary/political spoken word interlude over wavering feedback between two crushing hardcore tracks from Old Lines featuring growling, almost death-metal-y vocals. For me, the combination works. Worth a listen. —Lyle (Life Advice)

OUR NEIGHBORS SUCK:

Skullcrusher: 10"

Our Neighbors Suck were from Phoenix in the mid-'80s. They played with ■ lot of really cool bands when they were around and put out ■ record on the German label Rock-O-Rama in like '85 or '86. You wouldn't know this from buying this release because there is literally no information about the band in this record except the years the songs were recorded (between '85 and '88). The only reason I know anything about them is because I hang out in Arizona sometimes, but you never find their stuff over there because A.) They were not very good and B.) Record stores are generally sketched out about selling anything that came out on Rock-O-Rama after 1984. In any case,

what you get here is mediocre skate rock with really over-the-top (not cool) vocals that push it into some metal territory. This is kind of straddling the line between later Gang Green records and like... ■ crappy bar rock band. To top it off, the art on the release sucks and the cut sounds terrible. Apparently, this label was started just to reissue old stuff from Arizona—and that's really cool—but I'm legitimately bummed out by this. —Ian Wise (Slope)

OUTER SPACES: A Shedding Snake: LP

This was love at first listen. Outer Spaces is at once ghostly, with shimmering guitars and an airy production, and emotionally grounded—a middle ground between the Mirah and Cat Power. The songs ■ grounded by Cara Beth Satalino's assured, yet aching, voice. Her tender melodies and harmonies populate the lush pop folk and Western soundscapes. Highlights include "Born Enemy," "I Saw You," and "Postman," which possesses a haunting simplicity. When Satalino sings, "They say love is blind, or is it blinding?" I can only think: Good goddamn, that's poetic. —Sean Arenas (Don Giovanni)

PAARKS: Stranger Shores: LP

Super charming early 2000s indie pop tunes from Swedish band Paarks. Bands like Modest Mouse and even some glimmers of The Sea And Cake came to mind, but Clap Your Hands And Say Yeah is ■ spot-on comparison. Just ■ series of flowing songs with

gleaming guitar, weaving melodies, and ■ bouncing bass. The vocals are off-kilter and quirky, and their melodies are intricate but catchy. Easy on the ears. If you're into early 2000's indie, this is for you. —Camillye Reynolds (Loftslott)

PAT TODD ■ THE RANKOUTSIDERS:

Blood & Treasure: LP

Legendary Lazy Cowgirls frontman Pat Todd is back with the Rankoutsiders' fourth LP, ■ solid offering of booze-soaked blues and country-garage bar rock... in the best sense of the word. This is definitely a ■ rock'n'roll record that doesn't shy away from the often stereotypical trappings of the genre. Instead, the twelve songs here dive headfirst, both musically and lyrically, into these familiar waters by ■ who has been doing it for over twenty years. If you're no stranger to Todd's previous work, then you'll find few surprises here, if any. —Mark Twistworthy (Hound Gaud)

PATRICK JENNINGS: Careful Now: ■

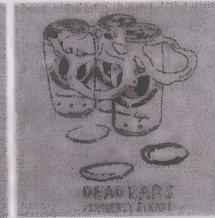
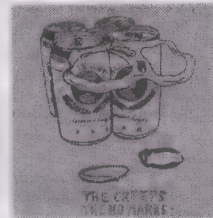
Patrick Jennings is a Bloomington-based musician best known for playing in Hot New Mexicans and Purple 7. Here, he's offering up eight songs of ramshackle, lo-fi acoustic pop. The arrangements are simple, with perfect additions, like the mariachi horns ■ the end of the first song. Patrick's songwriting quiets down well, highlighting his strong pop sensibility and cranking up the wistfulness until it's just right. When I saw Purple 7 a couple summers ago, I told ■ friend,

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"This band makes me wish I had a car, I could listen to them while I wash it." Well, this cassette makes me wish I lived in college town, I could walk around the empty campus summer nights with this my headphones. —Chris Terry (Let's Pretend)

PATSY'S RATS: Rock & Roll Friend: 7"
Being a shy fan of Portland, OR's Mean Jeans, I was pretty excited to check out Patsy's Rats who call Mean Jeans' Christian Blunda one of their own and one half of the fun male/female vocals Patsy's Rats offer. The other half of the singing duo is Patsy Gelb, the band's namesake. The title track on the single is definitely the strongest. It's shimmery, singalong-worthy, and reminds me of the best parts of youth and what summer used to mean. Like all nostalgia, there is a subdued hint of sadness that makes me feel like this was written for grown-ups like me. You can never be sure if the songs on a single are going to be throwaways or gems but the remaining two tracks, "It's Gonna Hurt" and "Hard Time Karen," follow a similar vein sonically and deserve a listen. —Nicole X (La-Ti-Da)

PIERRE OMER'S SWING REVUE:

Swing Cremona: CD
Voodoo Rhythm Records do a great job keeping an aesthetic. I feel like they are a label with a level of integrity, so it's no surprise that this is a great album. *Swing Cremona* mostly consists of standards by greats like Duke Ellington, Irving Berlin, and Louis Armstrong but

there some great originals here. If you're looking to take a night off from punk and wanna jive with your bad self, pick this one up. —Ryan Nichols (Voodoo Rhythm)

PINKWASH Collective Sigh: LP

Steeped in melody and doused in ferocity, Pinkwash is a certifiable force of nature. With seemingly alchemical abilities, the group's two members transform their guitar and drums into a tidal wave of sound reminiscent of noise rock progenitors Lightning Bolt. *Collective Sigh* will pull you into a hypnotic trance with its impenetrable hooks and deep grooves, and won't let you come up for air until the last note ebbs into oblivion. One of the best releases of 2016 so far, *Collective Sigh* deserves your undivided attention. Just be sure to turn your stereo up—all the fucking way. —Simone Carter (Don Giovanni)

PLOW UNITED: Three: LP

Maybe long term fans will disagree, but I think Plow United is a band that's gotten massively, exponentially better as they've aged. Their earlier stuff really missed the mark with me, but their previous album, *Marching Band*, was easily one of my favorite records of the past few years. I'm not sure if they've topped it with *Three*, but they sure as hell haven't embarrassed themselves. It's solid. Fourteen songs—most of them around the two-and-a-half-minute mark—and a real testament to how catchy and inventive

pop punk can be as a three piece. Buoyant, heartfelt, fun, decipherable, inventive, propulsive. If it's not good as *Marching Band*, it's in the running for sure. Beautifully packaged and pressed some of the most gorgeous white-and-pink marbled vinyl I've ever seen. *Get it.* —Keith Rosson (It's Alive)

POINT BLANK: On the DL: CD

Good hardcore. I will be honest that I was a little skeptical when I saw the N.Y.H.C. on the front. I was expecting something more on the growly and fighty end of the spectrum. In reality, it was all clear vocals and hard-driving songs. Reminds me of a couple of my all-time favorite New York hardcore bands: Murphy's Law and Anthrax. Now wait, before you go, "Ty, you hate metal. Did you actually just name check Anthrax?" I will stop you. Yes, I did, and yes I consider them to be every bit as much a hardcore or thrash band as I do a metal band. Those dudes skated—and were down with the punks and the hip hop community well and the metalheads... Anyways, enough about Anthrax. Point Blank are rad! In my mind, hardcore doesn't have to be cartoonish and over the top, just focused and good. Like these dudes! —Ty Stranglehold (Not Like You)

POISON HEART: Strong Ties: CD

Punkish rock that likely wouldn't've sounded out of place on Sympathy For The Record Industry, back when bands like Electric Frankenstein were a thing. If you forget what you're doing,

you might space out and imagine you're actually listening to The Cult's *Electric* album by mistake. However, matter how many times you ask it to play "Love Removal Machine," it will not honor your request. BEST SONG: "Chosen by the God." BEST SONG TITLE: "Squint Your Eyes." FANTASTIC AMAZING TRIVIA FACT: I got through the whole review without mentioning this band is from Poland. —Rev. Nerb (Zodiac Killer)

PRETTY BOY THORSON & THE LIL' HAPPINESS / LUTHERAN HEAT: Split 7"

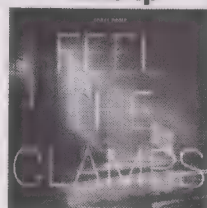
Lil' Happiness: Truth be told, I've been having trouble distinguishing Jesse Thorson's projects sonically from another. I don't truly understand the difference between what would make a song a Lil' Happiness tune versus what would make it a Slow Death song. Hell I can tell, is that the Lil' Happiness are more willing to sit back in the rocking chair and open up a bottle of beer on a rural night. There's a country twang and a hard rock strut present that's not always willing to show its face. The songs on this side are pretty fantastic, with "Wait" being a particular standout. Lutheran Heat: Stomp, shouty garage rock in the swamp gospel tradition. The name is appropriate, since I can't separate the music that's presented from the idea of a congregation in the southern heat, sweating and praising Jesus. The tracks even have a call and response between the pastor and the flock. Their second song is much more



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reminiscent of '50s rock ballads like "Will You Still Love Me Tomorrow?" Overall, recommended. —Bryan Static (Rad Girlfriend)

QUIN GALAVIS:

My Life in Steel and Concrete: CD

This album is all over the place. There are heavier, nearly melodic hardcore tracks where Galavis screams over loud guitars, but there are also softer, semi-acoustic tracks with string sections and pianos—and sometimes both tendencies manifest in the same track, with "Distaste." In general, Galavis delivers plaintive, prolix songwriting that wanders through genres, from grunge to folk to straightforward rock to something more abrasive. This double LP gives him enough space to do it all. —Lyle (Super Secret)

RADIOSTORM:

Age of Thoughtlessness: CD

Tough-guy hardcore from Slovenia with some parts that sound like skate punk and others that sound like old Metallica. Lyrics are alternately violent, slut-shaming, and vaguely motivational. If you want to listen to sketchy meatheads who don't play very fast, you've got a lot of options. Here's another. —Chris Terry (Self-released)

RANCID HELL SPAWN:

My Cigarette: 7"

Goddammit, this album art is disturbing as fuck, but in a really great way. Picture a bagpipe made from your average U.S. politician—an overweight and

balding, old-ass white dude's head and torso, nipples prominent, topless, being played by another dude of the same build, but with a goat head (seriously, google this shit pronto). Can't say I like it, but I like Rancid Hell Spawn is fronted, written, recorded, produced, and released by Charlie Chainsaw, a stalwart of the London punk rock scene practically since its inception damn near forty years ago. Still keeping it brutal, fuzzy, and bizarrely melodic. Way to stick with the program! —Jackie Rusted (Wrench, wrench.org)

RAVI SHAVI: Independent: 12"

Garage pop that occasionally uses the Arabic scale in their verses. (You know the one. It's in almost every surf rock song since the '60s.) It feels a lot like the garage rock from the Sonics era but prettied up enough to pass for twenty-one instead of seventy-five. And this might just be a personal choice, but I could have gone for shorter choruses. Some of them felt like they got caught up in the drone of their nursery rhyme chanting that they lost count at a point and just kept going. Despite my reservations, the band members sell their roles well as a unit. The music is undeniably coordinated and with purpose. It's a stoned-out beach day and you're hearing the music of a blown-out stereo, serenading the landscape with "last call" music before everybody packs up their gear. Want a hit? —Bryan Static (Almost Ready, almostreadyrecords.com)

REVENGE OF THE PSYCHOTRONIC

Colossal Velocity: LP/CD

Having listened to this album a few times, I can confirm that the title has been well chosen. ROTPM is not a jot for meandering, slow tunes; it just wants to blast the fuck out of everything around it. This is full-throttle punk rock being made by three guys armed with nothing more than a jackhammer and two pneumatic drills—or so it seems—given the commotion they make. To me, it's frenetic hardcore with a bit of street punk, whilst a friend of mine reckons it's a cross between Zeke and Lawnmower Deth. To be fair, his comparison is equally valid. —Rich Cocksedge (TNS)

RIGHT HERE, THE: Stick the Plan: CD

Straight out of the gate, the warm hum of well-used vocal chords burst through, bringing with them feelings of regret, nostalgia, and earnestness. Guitars are bright and uplifting, with a twang and grittiness to them. Lyrics are insular, though not narrow-minded. They sound like a small town America band, yet they're based in Minneapolis, a city that has produced too many amazing punk bands to count. Midwest living is certainly worn in their sleeves, especially in lyrics like: "Wake me when it's over / Judge me when I'm sober / You said you had your fill of lies and that's enough." There's a beautiful, slower song called "Seattle, Breathe" that I suspect I'll default on whenever things get rough here in the emerald city. With a slight southern drawl and

some of the hooks, this falls near the umbrella of cow punk. Fans of Arms Aloft, Red City Radio, Chuck Ragan, and The Lawrence Arms will love this. —Kayla Greet (Rum Bar)

ROUGE DIDIS: Love: CD

This Rouge Didis CD is kind of like an opened can of Coke that's been sitting in the sun too long; Love is flat, sweet, and devoid of originality. Sub-par musicianship mixes with unimaginative songwriting in this truly mediocre EP. Highly unrecommended. —Simone Carter (Self-released, rougedidis@gmail.com, rougedidis.com)

ROUGH KIDS: Self-titled: LP

As I read through the liner notes, I literally gasped. The notes state that all songs are written by Rough Kids except "Breaking Out" by Oscar Drill & The Bits, a fictional band from the overlooked sequel to *The Rocky Horror Picture Show*, *Shock Treatment*. "Breaking Out" is not only the best song in the cult flick but a song I've wanted to cover for years. You'll find it after the B side locked groove, which admittedly took some assistance for me to find. Even without the excellent cover, Rough Kids won me over with their lightning fast, riff-addicted punk in the vein of Testors and The Shitty Limits, with the right amount of spit and snarl. The songs stick to your frontal lobe until you find yourself chanting, "Animaa City! Animaa City! Animaa City!" —Sean Arenas (Sorry State, sorrystaterecords.com)

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RUTABEGA, THE:

Unreliable Narrator: LP

The Rutabega's latest release, *Unreliable Narrator*, is similar to their last album, *Brother the Lights Don't Work*, in that it includes a mix of shorter, poppier tunes and longer, slower jams that build before ultimately providing ■ emotional break. The punk-influenced opening track, "Shiny Destination," reminds me of ■ RVIVR song, while the nine-minute epic, "Lip," has the emotional context and structure of a 1990s emo song (which I love). I appreciate the diversity of the material and the structure of the track listing provides a nice emotional contrast. The addition of slide guitar ■ "St. Michael Himself" and strings on "A Willow Strong" make for a good mix in the sound, but as with the band's previous album, it's Garth Mason's drumming that provides a lot of the strength on these eight songs. His playing can be simple and steady or powerful and muscular, complimenting Josh Hensley's guitar playing and strong voice. The forty-one minutes of music serves as ■ continuation of this Indiana duo's previous work and an album of which they can certainly be proud. —Kurt Morris (Comedy Minus One)

SASS DRAGONS: *True Adventure: LP*

Plenty of Cong-jangle and bounce glued together with earlier (i.e. "less slick") Mean Jeans surf-beat while still bringing shards of Chi-town HC. The first Sass LPs touched me in a Queers-meets-Effigies/Raygun place.

This is ■ "maturing" Dragons, a little slicker, but still ready to regale the listener with tales of last night's party. Instead of a slash and burn PBR bender though, the record contains tunes using a saxophone, a flute, and even ■ couple of slow jams. So it's ■ listening equivalent of a fancy mix drink. With a pineapple and a little plastic sword. And an umbrella. But the umbrella is on fire. I'll take two of those. Recommended. —Matt Seward (Let's Pretend / No Breaks)

SCANDALS, THE:

This Country Is Going to Hell: 7"

Garland, Texas, street punks, The Scandals—not to be confused with the New Jersey band of the same name—have incredibly impressive hair. While it can be somewhat jarring to see liberty spikes alive and well atop someone's head in 2016, let's not forget what we can intuit from such ■ hairstyle: commitment to one's craft. This commitment is also apparent in both the band's mission statement—to keep street punk alive in Texas and never stop—as well as the four songs that make up the band's latest EP, *This Country Is Going to Hell*—distributed by self-proclaimed "geezer punk" label, Slope Records—on stunning absinthe-colored vinyl. Be forewarned: to dismiss The Scandals as yet another stuck-in-the-past, "old man yells at cloud" punk band is to miss out on some surprisingly memorable, dynamic barnburners and a lot of seriously ripping guitar work. We're talking

'80s hair metal caliber riffs and solos here. They're also mad about some stuff you're probably mad about too. —Kelley O'Death (Slope)

SCENICS, THE: *In the Summer: Studio Recordings 1977-78: LP*

Two sessions recorded during the titular period by ■ now-obscure Toronto outfit. Heavy influences being pulled from the Modern Lovers and Velvet Underground ("Do the Wait" is essentially a lyrical/structural rewrite of the Velvet's "I'm Waiting for the Man"), plus some pushing out towards rock's then-fringes. Love when stuff like this makes the rounds, not just because the tunes are so damned good, but also because it serves ■ reminder of a time when "punk" meant more than one single moribund sound that everyone apes and pledges allegiance to, aiming for cred but ultimately missing the whole point. —Jimmy Alvarado (Dream Tower)

SHANTIH SHANTIH:

Winter in September: LP

The shuffling drums and darkly twangy guitars make it hard not to think of the Southern Gothic streak that cuts through Alternative Tentacles; Anna Barratin's ghostly vocals really call Tarantella to mind. There's ■ generous dash of garage rock that adds some rawness and crunch to the twang, complete with the occasional backing "ooh la la's. The whole album has the feeling of ■ grim, fantastical folk tale—maybe having to do with the gorgeous cover

art, which features ■ strange encounter between a tiny knight and a gargantuan snail. —Indiana Laub (Wild Honey, wildhoneyrecords.bandcamp.com / Dusty Medical, kevin@themistreaters.com, dustymedical.com)

SHATTERED FAITH: *Volume III: LP*

From a genesis involving a rehearsal cassette dating from their earliest days comes this, the band's second full-length (not counting *Volume II*—which is listed on the Discogs.com website ■ an EP and I'm not in the mood to argue—or the assorted collections of previously released material). The content is comprised of modern re-recordings of tracks originally existing solely on demos and comps or have not otherwise previously seen the light of day, and lemme cut to the chase: this mutha's ■ doozy. The recording production is, dare I say, the best the band's ever sounded in-studio; their potent mix of muscly beach punk and Orange County thug-pop flat-out rages, and songs that were marginally interesting in previous incarnations shine here as some of the best tracks. Having considered myself ■ fan for ■ lot longer than many reading this have likely existed without being attached to an umbilical cord, I'd easily put this up in the number two spot on a "crucial" list, right after the six legendary tracks Posh Boy released in various incarnations way back when. Yes, kids, it's that goddamned good. —Jimmy Alvarado (Hostage, hostagerecords.com)

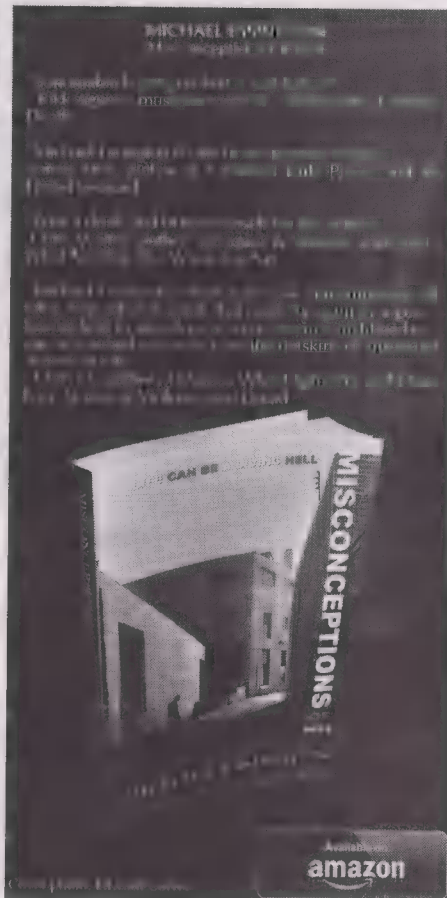
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Every single time I put on the EP, my heart jumps and swells a little. Every single song is utter perfection and there is no **num** out there like Shee Mag. (Okay, I could be wrong. I'd love to be wrong. Show **me** the light if I'm wrong.) They've been called DIY classic rock and I'm into that. The instruments come together to form the perfect mix of poppy hooks and riffs you would find in the best classic rock with themes and—care of singer Christina Halladay—a big, semi-distorted, punk voice. Icing: within every song there's **an** uplifting, often political, message with zero to little cheese. From urges to keep fighting the good fight(s) to a love song that also does double duty as an anthem for independence, you can't lose. Also, so good to dance to. —Nicole X (Static Shock)

When I first put this LP on the turntable, I was thinking that this poppy and punky trio from Canada sounded like if '90s Brit-pop mainstays Lush did a record of Jawbreaker covers. After additional listens, I hear a little early Superchunk influence in the mix as well. The songs are distorted and fuzzed-out but never stray from delivering in the hook department—a recipe for success in my book. If you like vocals clean—and guitars poppy and distorted with hooks galore—this might be just the thing for you, too. —Mark Twistworthy (Big Smoke, bigsmokevancouver.com)

Poppy punk outta Umea, Sweden. Not ■ obnoxious as its American counterpart, and there's also ■ bit more variation in approach, ■ well ■ a bit more "punk" in the mix. Not bad, not life changing. —Jimmy Alvarado (luftsloft, luftsloftrecords.com)

I remember Skin Disorder from twelve or thirteen years ago when people used to make fun of oi music. They haven't changed at all from what I **■** tell, and Strong Island Bootboys are along the same lines. Both bands **■** doing a style that reminds **■** a lot of late-'80s/early-'90s NYC oi (Brute Force, early Oxblood, etcetera) and **■** doing pretty much pitch-perfect recreations of the sound. The label that put this out has some done some reissues of older NYC oi and, honestly, if they had killed this **■** lost tapes from bands of that era, I don't think most people would even know the difference. —Ian Wise (United Riot)

Sleeptalker play garage pop with attitude, with non-characteristic breakdowns that somehow fit the crazed vibe they're going for. I think that they think that these songs are hilarious, but they're also fairly rocking, with solid musicianship all around. It's all played slightly faster than expected, which is always welcome. The members were in other known bands like Science

Of Yabra, Luxury Flats, Old Growth, and Organized Sports, but this record doesn't have any of the slapdash problems so many supergroup recordings are plagued with. *Dead Tubes* is strong enough to ensure that Sleepwalker won't be dead anytime soon. —Art Ettinger (Bakery Outlet)

Two solid, modern/current American staples here. The Slow Death's first track gives off a Jawbreaker vibe, with ■ happier chorus, while the second is truthfully-done take on Negative Approach's classic, "Nothing." Wasn't expecting that, but it's well done. On the flip, The Raging Nathans prove to be one of the consistent bands doing this sort of thing currently. These two cuts ■ ■ ■ little reminiscent of Jon Cougar Concentration Camp (at least to me). Great cover art by Vacation's one and only, Evan Wolff. —Steve Adamyk (Rad Girlfriend / ADD)

The debut album from this Swedish hardcore band is nine songs and twenty-seven minutes of chaotic intensity. The primary bands I was reminded of were a couple of lesser-known European acts, Membrane (France) and Trainwreck (Germany). Some of the guitar riffs were reminiscent of High On Fire and I heard a section or two of a song that sounded like it could've been pulled from Converge's catalog. But despite having a horrible band name and

album title, Snake Tongue seem to create an urgent sound that provides the listener with something driving and rumbling but not redundant. There's a lot of power and energy behind the songs, albeit slightly darker. If they keep this up, I could see Snake Tongue quite easily fitting in on a label like Deathwish. —Kurt Morris (The Sign)

So What opens their two-song EP with an epic Gary Glitter-style, no-words singalong framed in fuzzy guitar melodies and ■ crawling cave beat. "I Can See But You Don't Know" carries the same glam leanings with a bit more speed. It's a solid record. Look out for So What especially, if you're into Guida or Killed By Glam. Sounds good loud. —Billups Allen (Just Add Water, justaddwaterrecords. bigcartel.com)

From what I gather, each side comprises ■ EP, though I dunno enough about the band to discern if either was previously released. You get impassioned lyrics with a political bent delivered via spleen-shredding vocals atop loose, sample-peppered hyper-thrash that occasionally veers off into artier fare and even shows traces of ■ jazz influence at times. Deeper than it may appear at first blush, which makes it worth more than a cursory listen. —Jimmy Alvarado (SRA, srarecords.com)

[illegible]

SPECTRES: *Utopia*: LP

Effective mix of European goth, American death rock, and a smidge of gloomy wave to give it all some pop heft. Lotta chorus 'n' reverberation on the guitars, loping bass, and danceable percussion. The perfect soundtrack for not-quite-chilly late fall days. —Jimmy Alvarado (Deranged)

SPENCER MOODY AND THE ANZALONES: *An Old Man Called Me Bud Cort*: CS

The instruments are dialed back, but this EP finds Spencer Moody's vocals as dark and coarse as they were during his time in Murder City Devils. Whether howling over the sludgy march of "Polish Handgun" or warbling and cracking just short of in-key in a cheeky rendition of "Bird on the Wire," he stands as the emotional center of each song. The songs themselves are somewhat interchangeable—even the few that lean toward the lighter side are plodding and dirgelike. The Leonard Cohen and Nick Cave comparisons are probably inevitable. It's all a little off-putting and bizarre, which had to have been the goal here, so... mission accomplished. —Indiana Laub (Let's Pretend)

SPEWING CUM / GARBAGE BRAIN: *Split*: CS

I back your label if you name it King Pizza, have a rad label symbol, and a cool "let's party and get arty" label manifesto. I back Garbage Brain as a fun echo- and fuzz-drenched two-

songed side of a split cassette (think Rip Off and Burger babies). I simply can't back your choice to name your band Spewing Cum. I'm no prude, but when there are mysterious and sometimes "edgy" other hardcore outfits (like Culo, the Spits), not to mention Dwarves, wearing a panty on your head and baiting the listener with a name or songs that are propped up by shock and not chops, thanks, but nah. I'm not writing off Garbage Brain or King Pizza by association, but I'll be ignoring SC. Save it for the GG fans. —Matt Seward (King Pizza)

STRUL: *7 Spårs: 7"* EP

Some great Swedish thrash from Gothenburg. I'm hearing bits of Japan's Assfort and early Raw Power mixed in, with throat-shredding vocals and a nice swinging undertow to the rhythm section. This baby's gonna get played until the grooves wear out. —Jimmy Alvarado (Levande Begravd)

SUN BATHER: *Self-titled*: 12"

A Danish all-star band including members of some of the very best in early 2000's international punk and hardcore, including Gorilla Anore, Amdi Petersen's Arme, Burial, Intensity, Born/Dead and several others. Mid-paced garage punk with an interesting take on country/folk influence ("Shady Grove"). If I had to pick a crowd pleaser or a hit single, I'd say that it would most definitely be "Shouldn't Have Done It" which exudes Cramps and TSOL attitude all

over with some eerie synth work added towards the end of the song. Hopefully you caught them when they toured the West Coast late summer of 2016. If you didn't, then pick this record up and gleefully imagine what could have been. —Juan Espinosa (Sun Bather, info@hjernesvind.com)

SWAMPLAND: *The Stranded West*: LP

This is an impressive first record for these Long Beach boys. It ricochets between post-punk, desert serenades, and gothic country, with a Dead Moon cover for good measure. There's a nice variety of instruments on these songs—including acoustic guitars, synths, piano, and even some slide guitar—which together give the record a lot of strength and dynamics. The vocals are very confident with a Mission UK meets Peter Murphy baritone. Do yourself a favor and pick this record up today. —Ryan Nichols (Self-released)

TALBOT ADAMS:***Community/Recession Era*: LP**

Take away the fuzzy garage sound from Outrageous Cherry and combine it with the stripped-down, acoustic Lemonheads songs and you're on Talbot Street. This is a very minimal record instrumentally but it has a psychedelic atmosphere. The songs are based around some really lovely vocals and an acoustic guitar, with some tambourine and light sound textures. Great melodies; great chill record. —Ryan Nichols (Secret Identity, secretidentity@email.de)

TENEMENT: *The Self-titled Album*: LP

This band has become almost GBV-ish in the frequency of recorded output. Believe me, no complaints here. So I won't even fan the flames that seven songs are probably more of a beefy EP than a full-length. (Back to the music, please.) "Underworld Hotel" may be mellower than the typical full-tilt rockers we have come to expect from this band. But it is so gosh darn catchy that it really shouldn't bother anyone one single iota. "Witches in a Ritual" is also guilty as charged. This deserves a spot next to your other records by this band, and if that doesn't apply to you—what are you waiting for? —Sean Koeppenick (Forward / Deranged)

TERRORSURFS: *"Surfbomb" b/w "Locodinosaurio": 7"*

Ex Terrorsurs. If surf and sludge had a basic-ass baby, and we all, collectively, were its gooble-titted-eathwormy-grammy-mama's yup yup dot org. Yeah. —Jackie Rusted (Killjoy, killjoy-records.de)

TOO MANY VOICES: *South of Sunrise*: CD

A New York four piece offers up hooks galore in this full-length. I hear traces of bands like 7 Seconds, Adolescents, and even some Horace Pinker. The background vocals even reference '80s DC bands (you will know it when you hear it). It is all played expertly and with ultra-precision. Songs like "Outdated" and "Homecoming" will lay waste to your

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Sigh Down One - Memory Is Short Longing LP
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Null - *Sleepwalking Days* LP

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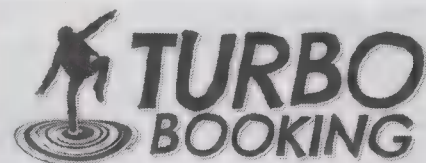
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stereo speakers. Looking forward to watching this band progress and getting even more awesome. —Sean Koeppenick (Self-released)

TOUGH SHITS: "Action Breeze" b/w "Adult Fantasy": 7"

Philadelphia sons, Tough Shits, keep it raw but clean and catchy as fuck. With singalong vocals and ■■■■ sweet-ass git licks, they have ■■■■ thinking of Bent Outta Shape, RIP. Definitely worth ■ spin, or ■ dozen. Apparently, this is their first release in four years. I'm just glad they are still at it. My curiosity has been piqued, and they have two full length albums for my listening pleasure! Jeezus, if it wasn't for this rag and the world wide web, one may have to actually leave the house to find new music... shudder. —Jackie Rusted (Oops Baby, oopsbabyrecords.com)

TOYS THAT KILL: Sentimental Ward: LP

There ■ always so many mixed emotions when you are writing ■ review of one of your favorite bands. Excitement and anxiety come to the forefront. Toys That Kill are easily in my top ten current bands to listen to. They have songs for most of my moods. The last full length album *Fambly 42* was great (see my review in the database on Razorcake.org), but I feel that record had more of ■ Underground Railroad To Candyland vibe to it than ■ TTK album. I had attributed this to it being their first record in their own Clown Sound studio, producing it themselves rather than working with their long-

time producer Mike Vasquez. Well, I ■■■ here to tell you that *Sentimental Ward* is ■ TTK album through and through. It comes across with the off kilter urgency of *We Control the Sun*, but fresh for 2016. It makes the hairs on the back of my neck stand up when I listen to it. I can't stop listening to it. Todd, Sean, Jimmy, and Chachi work the magic when they get together. I don't know what their secret is and, to be honest, I don't want to know. I just want to revel in what may very well become my favorite Toys That Kill album. —Ty Stranglehold (Recess)

TRANSGRESSIONS, THE: Fucked Up: 7"

Madison, Wisconsin's The Transgressions are everything that is pop punk: restless, bored, snotty, snarky, nihilistic, depressed, self-deprecating, a little immature, kinda hungry, contemplating ordering a pizza, super drunk, super high, probably need to shower, but don't really feel like it right now, really into the Ramones, but not, like, *too much*, and super in "like" with girls, but girls may have cooties, the jury's still out. *Fucked Up* is about many of these things. It's also about having holes in your socks, and how minor inconveniences often echo the larger emotional tragedies in our lives—but also how, for real, having holes in your socks is super fucking annoying. From "I Don't Wanna Be," the catchy fuck-my-life-just-let-me-die-here-in-this-gutter-as-long-as-there-are-also-opiates-in-the-gutter anthem that kicks off the record, to "You're the

One" and "Grim Fairytale"—which both tell stories of love gone, well, not wrong, but y'know, whatever—the short and bitter offerings on *Fucked Up* are penned and played with equal parts grime, rage, and despair. And it really fucking works. —Kelley O'Death (It's Alive)

TREVOR WHITE: "Crazy Kids" b/w

"Movin' in the Right Direction": 7" EP Re-release from 1976. This particular aperitif has ■ feeling deeply ashamed of the time I have wasted not being aware of Trevor White's career. This two-song teaser has guitar that winks at The Who and features lyrical anthems of wild, reckless youth and young love. Trevor White has played with the likes of Chuck Wagon and Martin Gordon. Wait, what? Sparks is not only ■ no longer existent caffeinated malt beverage that almost killed Paul Trash a couple of times, it's ■ band, man! How have I never heard this stuff before? Although from what I can tell, I prefer the Sparks recordings from before White joined. It's all terrific shit! I am floored and have a lot more listening to do. Totes stoked I got sucked into this rabbit hole. Totally worth it not only for the history lesson; these two songs have summertime fun-time written all over them! —Jackie Rusted (Just Add Water)

TROPHY WIFE: All the Sides: CD

If Trophy Wife ■■ complicated in a more reducible way, you could call it post-hardcore or post-rock. However,

such ■ term won't hold them. Instead of flaunting art school *ideas*, they're complicated in ■ cerebral, nearly spiritual way. Not unlike Lungfish—who were often accused of writing the same song over and over—but, to me, the plodding to driving riffing became metaphorical to life itself. Waxing and waning as Daniel Higgs's reached into his psyche for meaning, there was a similar yet constant reminder in the music that life would move forward and change. *All the Sides* moves ■■ in that way—hypnotic and thoughtful, with understated power and resilience. —Craven Rock (Dead Tank)

TURBO A.C.'S: Damnation Overdrive: CD

Was a little surprised to see that this band was still around. They have been going for ■■■■ time, working kind of ■ Dwarves/Zeke/Turbonegro angle. They always seemed to be somehow huge in Europe and some of their early records ■■ quite valuable. This is a reissue of their first album from 1996 with ■ couple of bonus tracks. If you cannot get enough of that hyped-up garage punk sound and they have escaped your notice, you will wanna check this out. —Mike Frame (Concrete Jungle)

UNIT F: Comes the Day: CD

Orange County's Unit F is back with their third full-length of extremely catchy, mainline melodic punk. Notably, Greg Hetson of Circle Jerks/Bad Religion fame is ■■■ of the producers of this outstanding release. Hetson also assisted in the recording, bringing

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uncommonly experienced ears to the table. I really dig the vocals, which have a slight melancholia to them, almost harkening to Bonecrusher or Pegboy. It's oddly refreshing to hear a band this good release an album with such slick production. No one's giving Unit F anything less than an "A." —Art Ettinger (Self-released, unitffmusic.com)

USELESS ID: *State Is Burning: CD*

Israel's **USELESS ID** is small, as can you imagine; everyone knows each other. Monotonix, The Genders, Not On Tour, as well as newer bands like Sweatshop Boys, The Orions, ZagaZaga, etcetera. Useless ID has been one of the most successful under the punk/hardcore umbrella. And with **USELESS ID** these guys honestly *crush* most Southern Californians at their own game. Their craft is *flawless*: blistering melodic hardcore that truthfully sounds like a modern 7 Seconds during the verses, paired with (very authentic) Bad Religion-esque choruses that have harmonies down so goddamn-tight, they're goose bump-inducing. No doubt the Blasting Room recording with Bill Stevenson is the helm had something to do with that—sure—but a studio can only capture what's already there. Politically charged, without being over the top, these tracks are super slick, almost skate punk times, but with enough grit to keep them aggressive enough. I'm a awful picky bastard with this subgenre, but I'll definitely be listening to this again. —Steve Adamyk (Fat, fatwreck.com)

USELESS ID: *We Don't Want the Airwaves: 7" EP*

These Israeli *Rock Against Bush* veterans return with a polished pop punk EP featuring one song about loving the Ramones, two about being pacifist anti-statists (one of which may technically be a folk punk song), and **USELESS ID** about a failed relationship. Seems about right. If you've liked this band some point in the last twenty years, you'll probably like this EP. —Lyle (Fat Wreck, fatwreck.com)

VARIOUS ARTISTS: *B-Sides: 7"*

Four bands with B names split a 7". Didn't this thing come out a few years ago? Maybe I've just been hearing about it forever. The Brokedowns: Hard and heavy as if Black Flag decided to become a pop punk band. One of the best bands around. There is no debating this fact. This track is a ripper just like every track they've released in the last ten years. I'm always happy to have more Brokedowns in my life. Boilerman: According to a website review I read a while ago, Boilerman is now a transcontinental punk band, which sounds pretty intense. This track is a bit like a Crimpshrine jam. Their share of the 7" is a good sense of pacing. Feels like an epic in three minutes. Brickfight: I always wondered what these guys did after their split with Shang-A-Lang. This is basement punk like how I remember it. Rough around the edges, but its **USELESS ID** is an excellent pop song played by a bunch of angry dudes going a little too fast. You know,

in a good way. Boxsledder: Oh, this is a good track. Can't quite put my finger on who it reminds me. Maybe the better B-tier Fat Wreck bands of the '00s. Yeah, I think I hear Dead To Me in this. The vocals balance between a few different voices, with the main melody stealing the show. This 7": This is a great value. Very few four-way splits have this level of quality throughout the entire record. Pound for pound, I'd put up against pretty much any other four-way split I've heard. —Bryan Static (Rad Girlfriend)

VARIOUS ARTISTS: *Do You Like American Music? Vol. 1: CS*

Who doesn't love a good comp? This most excellent compilation put together by Seb Radix—apparently cherry picking bands he met and played with on tour here in the States. Some of my favorites include Quaaludes' "Call you Up," which is by far one of their best tunes, Street Eaters' "Paralyzed," another SF gem, Mike Watt And The Secondmissingmens' "Beach Blanket Bong-out" is a no brainer, and Dead Bars with "Just Fine." There are bands that are pretty damn good that I haven't heard of, like Weekend Mattress, Bad Tats, and The Brass. Pretty sure you need this. Comes with a sweet little fold-out zine en Français. —Camylle Reynolds (Rock'n'Roll Masturbation)

VARIOUS ARTISTS: *Noise Pollution: 7"*

Four songs by four bands that play the same style of trashy garage punk, more

or less. Get Off The Cop is the standout with the song "Joy Device" and its psychotic shuffling rhythm and lunatic screaming. Everything else blends into a mess of sweet, sweet feedback, and that's okay. —MP Johnson (It's Trash)

VARIOUS ARTISTS:

Pinball Summer Soundtrack: LP

Was there ever a more appropriate record to find in my review pile? I instantly marveled at the fact I was holding vinyl that said "PINBALL" in bold font at the top of the sleeve. How could it be that there was a movie with the silver ball in the name that I wasn't aware of? *Pinball Summer* is a Canadian *Animal House*, or *Porky's*-style movie, which was renamed to *Pick-Up Summer* when released in the U.S. I find it strange to omit pinball from the title when introducing it to the country that manufactures the most machines in the world, but what do I know about marketing? Seemingly, this soundtrack was written by two men, Jay Boivin and Germain Gauthier who had played in garage and surf bands prior to this. It evokes feelings of sunshine, swimming pools, make-out parties, the beach, and being young. The first three songs have "Summer" in the title. While this record is barely—if even—punk adjacent, it definitely emulates music that I enjoy outside of punk. There's a heavy Beach Boys and Bee Gees sound with small bits of late '70s Queen, ELO, and T-Rex, plus some synth, and even a little saxophone. Based on the trailer which is full of topless gals and

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an incidental side of pinball, I doubt I'll check out the movie. Though I may have just found my new "go-to" record to listen to while I play pinball. Also, if I lived somewhere that could facilitate summer pool parties, this soundtrack would be in heavy rotation. —Kayla Greet (Jay And Germain, no address listed)

VARIOUS ARTISTS: *The Transcendental Maggot's Revenge: 7"*

Classhole start things off with some really bland '80s hardcore, the kind I hear in my head when someone says they don't like hardcore. Then Beagle Boys take things up a notch with some rad, noisy, effects-ruled dissonance. The vocals wash in and out over what might be an abused synthesizer or just a guitar that's fucked wit'. Great track. Toe Tag come in with a pretty decent hardcore song that goes a little overboard on the guitar solo. I think this is the first time I've actually heard Flag Of Democracy and if they can bring it like this, I can't imagine how they sounded in '82. The vocals go from shouted to this weird wavery, shrieky delivery and the drums... homie just pounds the fuck out of 'em. Unfortunately, Ugly Americans end the record with a banal, jokey song sung in the voice of a kid who wants his pony picture back. —Craven Rock (Tsuguri)

VICIOUS IRENE / VEHEMENCE: Split LP
Vicious Irene hail from Sweden and kick this split off with some quality d-beat punk with awesome vocals that

alternate between soaring harmonies and venomous rasps. More Discharge influence and less Amebix I'm on board. Marseille, France's Vehemence harkens back to the earliest Kylesa recordings, matching the ferocity, darkness, and overall loudness. The songs mostly atmospheric and dark, although the final song "Dystopia" turns the speed dial up a couple notches. Both bands strongly support radical feminist ideals through their lyrics, with Vicious Irene even quoting the *SCUM Manifesto* by Valerie Solanas. Cut them up and leave them for dead. —Juan Espinosa (Ruin Nation / Blackout Brigade)

THE WILD:

From the Cities We Fled: CD

In 2005 I was on tour as a roadie with a band whose tourmates were one of those generic emo acts that had two vocalists: one sang and the other did screamy vocals. Even in 2005 I felt that sound was played out. It was kind of cool when Thursday had broken through with it a few years earlier but then whatever that genre is called blew up on Warped Tour and became the soundtrack for teens in eyeliner and hair hanging over one eye with studded belts and all kinds of things that could be purchased at Hot Topic. Here it is, 2016, and evidently this sound still exists. Am I just out of touch—are there differences between these bands? Or is this the bachata music of suburban white kids? (Sorry bachata fans, it seriously all sounds the same to

me.) Just I don't sound entirely like out-of-touch curmudgeon, I will say that We The Wild's drummer isn't too bad. Now get off my lawn. —Kurt Morris (Self-released)

WEEKEND DADS:

September Downs: LP

Weekend Dads as catchy as head lice in a kindergarten classroom. The songs crawl into your scalp. They're too fast to catch. They have you scratching and tapping a blasting rate. And then they're just there. You can't get rid of them. They're stuck in your head but you like it. It's kind of like that. This is pop punk for someone like who doesn't usually enjoy the genre. Great songwriting and every member of the band is pulling their weight and then some. Good one, Dads. —Jon Mule (It's Alive)

WHITE LUNG: *Paradise: LP*

White Lung's latest release is super sharp. It's more polished than their previous releases, which some may see as taking away from their raw energy, but from the first listen I was hooked (and that rarely happens anymore, although god knows I listen for it on every album). There's something clean and poppy about it, while retaining aggressive, driving drumming and intricate guitar work. Songs like "Hungry" instant classics: rumbling bass, Joy Division-sounding guitar, and catchy lyrics. Most of the songs in these twenty-eight minutes similar in their infectiousness. I really can't get

enough of these ten songs. Hell, there's a good possibility this isn't just my album of the summer, but the album of the year. If you're looking for catchy, aggressive, danceable punk, this is it. —Kurt Morris (Domino)

WRONG SOCIETY, THE: *"Dark Clouds" b/w "Don't Know Why": 7"*

Coming from the moodier side of Teenage Shutdown-style revival punk, Germany's The Wrong Society clock in two infectious, mid-tempo slammers with their first American single. "Dark Clouds" describes the sound well: stormy melodies with an eerie synth hovering like the smell of lightning. "Don't Know Why" has the same downcast feel with a catchy bass melody at the forefront. A solid release for fans of the *Teenage Shutdown!* or *Back from the Grave* compilations series. —Billups Allen (13 O'Clock)

ZIG-ZAGS: *Running Out of Road: CD*

I am personally crowning these guys the new Thrasher skate rock ambassadors. They blend stoner rock, punk, metal, and thrash together seamlessly. It's bands like this that make kids grow their hair long, ride skateboards, ride motorcycles, and ditch school to get stoned. If you like the Melvins, DRI, Motörhead, or the Spits but want something new, these are your boys. —Ryan Nichols (Castle Face, castlefacemailorder@gmail.com)

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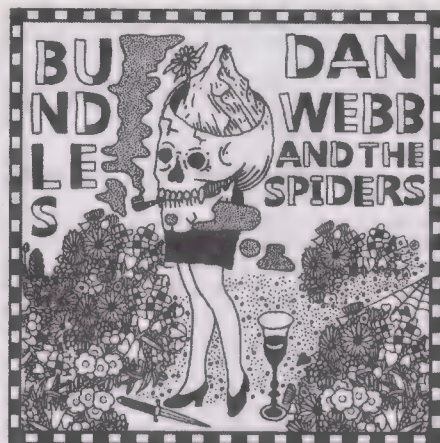
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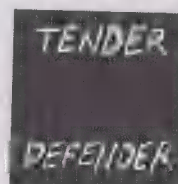
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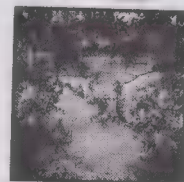
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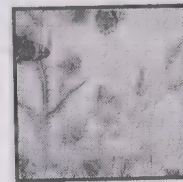
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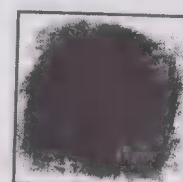
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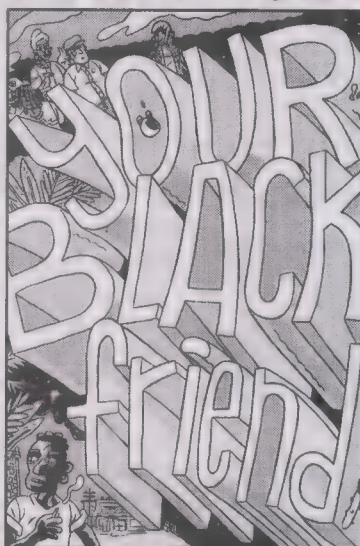
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JULY 2016
PICKED & SHIRLED FROM THE ZINE

CINEMA OF LIFE, \$?, 5 1/2" x 8 1/2", copied, 14 pgs.

Over the course of fourteen pages, Gabriel Hart details his escape from the toxicity of Los Angeles into the surrounding desert. His post-flight shift to poetry conveys airiness, ■ sense of space stiflingly absent in the city. With that said, the author's lack of prose control throughout weakens the impact of what might otherwise be ■ powerful transition. Despite *Cinema of Life's* brevity, this one is hard to read. Witness this sample sentence: "I moved away from the city that I once solemnly swore I would die with, decisively breaking the chain of warped solidarity that would have otherwise confined me to its random Russian Roulette legacy of cyclical obsolescence, where an artist's sharp but brief peaks of success and support tend to eventually get blown into the wind from the very revolving door of its fickle migrants, who aren't exactly sure what they want from the city after they realize the L.A. they were looking for may no longer exist." I understand the argument for form following function, but to warrant further consideration, this over-modified rambling needs editing. —Michael T. Fournier (Space Cowboy Books, spacecowboybooks.com)

EARTH FIRST! SUMMER 2016, \$6.50, 8" x 10 1/2", 80 pgs.

Earth First! is a journal of ecological resistance. They're aiming for ■ audience of radicals, but there's ■ little something for the causal leftist here, too, like ■ article or two on how Bernie and Trump are more alike than apart. Another cool piece gives one prisoner's advice for getting ■ little more humane treatment while behind bars. How does one do it? By invoking The Religious Land Use and Institutionalized Persons Act, which, when invoked, can get ■ prisoner some garden access, allow them to grow ■ beard, and generally "mak[e] the swine do what they don't want to do." Speaking of swine, did you know that radioactive boars are ■ complete pain in Japan's ass? They run wild in the Fukushima region and cause ■ mess in the surrounding area. And I know what you're thinking, but we can't eat them. One consequence of their inedibility means less people want to hunt (depopulate) them. They continue to "breed furiously." A conundrum indeed. Throw in some questionable Unabomber worship and that's the *Earth First!* summer issue. —Jim Joyce (Daily Planet Publishing, *Earth First!* Journal, PO Box 964, Lake Worth, FL 33460)

GENEVA13 #22, \$2, 5 1/2" x 8 1/2", 59 pgs.

What we have here is ■ zine devoted to Geneva, N.Y., ■ small town in the Finger Lakes region of the state, just 30 thirty miles south of Lake Erie. Geneva isn't ■ bad place to be, it's just not as sexy as the major cities to its left and right. And for that reason, history cares less about it. Kevin Dunn and Annie Greenwood document what's worth knowing about Geneva. The end resulting ins an appreciation of the smaller histories that make up ■ community. Issue 22 has ■ bit of 18th eighteenth century history, interviews with the owners of a long-running independent sandwich shop, as well as with ■ community activist who's trying to raise the town's quality of life and reputation. Or put it another way—ever see those *Images of America* books in museum gift shops? They always have a sepia-toned photo on the cover and detail either small -town or neighborhood life in pre-1950s

USA. *Geneva13* is like those titles, but maybe less waterlogged with nostalgia and more excited by how the past and present coexist in day-to-day life. Anyway, I dig. —Jim Joyce (Geneva13 Press, PO Box 13, Geneva, NY 14456, mail@geneva13.com)

GREAT ENCOUNTER, THE, \$5, 5 1/2" x 8 1/2", ink-jet printed, 16 pgs. Steeped in existential questions and deep thoughts about topics from outer space to extraterrestrial life, *The Great Encounter* is ■ short chapter book of prose from Jean-Paul L. Garnier. Only sixteen pages long, this small zine didn't look like much from the outside, but the writing inside piqued my interest: outer space, explorers from another planet, or dimension. Jean-Paul's prose goes from sci-fi scenarios, to introspective questions about our own society and the alien-ness of it that each of ■■ sometimes know too well. A great read for anyone who sometimes looks up at the stars in the sky and wonders what's out there; what secrets our own universe could be hiding. —Tricia Ramos (The Great Encounter, jplgarnier.blogspot.com, spacecowboybooks.com)

MAXIMUM ROCK'N'ROLL #398

\$4.99, 5 1/2" x 1 1/2", newsprint, 108 pgs.

MRR still keeps it real after nearly four hundred issues, featuring interviews with TØRSÖ, Mollot, and The Domestics as well as the usual scene report and punk abroad. I'm particularly struck by the discussion of 924 Gilman, ■ (once?) venerable Berkeley DIY venue. Several folks chime in about the venue's decline in standards. And in fact, *MRR*, ■ zine historically affiliated with the venue, supports ■ recent boycott stating, "Without strong and sincere corrective measures from the people already participating in the running of the club, we [...] will not be able to offer it our support." Strong words. I have no horse in this race—as I'm not ■ Bay Area local and I don't have ■ clear understanding of the issue—but I do hope that DIY venues are actively listening to their community and not being self-serving pricks. It's awesome to know that after nearly forty years, *MRR* still takes the time to hold accountable other DIY institutions. For an avid reader, this is another solid issue. And for a lucky first time reader, #398 is proof that *MRR* has still got teeth after all this time. —Sean Arenas (Maximum Rock'n'Roll, PO Box 460760, SF, CA, 94146, maximumrocknroll.com)

MISHAP #35: CHITTERING MADNESS

\$3 or trade, 5 1/2" x 8 1/2", copied w/ color insert, 47 pgs.

Part travelogue, part birding manual, this zine had me thinking, "Should I get into bird watching?" Set in two trips, this issue of *Mishap* covers a couple's love of bird watching across the North and Southwest. The first part focuses on Eugene, Ore. and several parks, preserves, and other bird-friendly areas. The second part of the zine recounts ■■ anniversary trip for the couple to several parks across Utah and New Mexico. The author and his partner's love and hobby of bird watching is infectious, to say the least. I found myself visualizing all the birds and beautiful landscapes they ■■w and visited. There are so many different types of birds the couple identifies across their two trips, and the middle of the zine features

five gorgeously vivid photos of all the locations they went to during their anniversary trip. My only complaint is that I wanted photos of all the birds they saw, but I guess that just means I'll need to pick up a book of birds and get out there to start identifying them myself! —Tricia Ramos (Mishap, PO Box 5841, Eugene, OR 97405, mishapzine@yahoo.com)

ONE SCLEROSIS: AN M.S. STORY

\$6, 5½" x 8½", laser printed, 32 pgs.

This graphic memoir chronicles author Chris Kill's first few months after being diagnosed with multiple sclerosis. The title of the zine sets the tone, joking, "Multiple sclerosis? Why couldn't I get just, like, one sclerosis?" Twenty-one years young, the author notices tingling in his hands one day, and after reluctantly going to the hospital, he is diagnosed with MS. What follows are daily injections, numbness, vertigo, nausea, weakness, and a general blow to his own self worth. In the foreword, the author explains that through the comic strip style format he was able to go through a sort of catharsis, expressing his frustrations and trials in learning to deal with his illness. *One Sclerosis* is an honest and realistic account of learning to live with an invisible illness, and how to be strong and take control of your life. —Tricia Ramos (One Sclerosis: An M.S. Story, 11051 Grassy Glen Dr., Houston, TX 77064, etsy.com/shop/chriskillco)

RICKIE & AIMEE MONTHLY #10, \$?, 7" x 8½", 14 pgs.

Rickie & Aimee Monthly is a sort of "what's happening" newsletter for young Memphis weirdos. Issue 10 showcases an interview with local photographer Jade Thirawas and, marriage advice from

all the bands, contributors, and organizers. It is not only a reminder of how important music and arts programs are in our schools, but an example of how a community can come together to support and work with each other for a good cause. —Tricia Ramos (Save Music in Chinatown: The First Two Years, savemusicinchinatown.com)

SUBTERRAIN #73, \$7, 11" x 11", print, 80 pgs.

It's always great to see a copy of this excellent Canadian lit mag in my review pile. The editors of *subTerrain* consistently choose seemingly simple themes and let contributors run wild. This issue focuses on secrets, with ruminations on the recent Ashley Madison hack, eating disorders, and organized crime at the fore. Like previous issues, this one's a slow burn, best savored over several reading sessions to allow the prose's different forms and tones to congeal. Recommended. —Michael T. Fournier (PO Box 3008 Main Post Office, Vancouver BC V6B 3X5 Canada)

TLALX, \$?, 5½" x 8½", copied, 64 pgs.

I can't say I've ever heard of the record label To Live A Lie, but I am familiar with some bands they have released: Magrudergrind, I Object!, ACxDC, et cetera. They're primarily a grind/power violence label, based out of North Carolina. To Live A Lie marked their tenth anniversary in 2015 and this zine is an account of those ten years, told by their founder, Will Butler. It's nicely laid out and includes a solid narrative of the first few years. He gets in the weeds with this, detailing many of the split releases he did and his feelings on them. If you're a big fan of the label, you'll definitely appreciate this. A big chunk of the zine is interviews reprinted from other zines with various bands

It is not only a reminder of how important music and arts programs are in our schools, but an example of how a community can come together to support and work with each other for a good cause.

—Tricia Ramos | SAVE MUSIC IN CHINATOWN: THE FIRST TWO YEARS

rockabilly couple Anne Schorr and Richard James. One tidbit: don't complain about your partners in public! There's also a relationship advice column, a style icon feature—icon Ariel hates denim, which is gutsy—and an "availables" section with 8 Memphis cuties, like Baby Blood (m), who wants to smoke weed in a dumpster with you; and Peapits (f), who wants some of that sourdough starter you've been talking about. Alright, at the least, you'd want to email Rickie & Aimee for a list of fun things to do after getting thrown out of Graceland for pretending to be Edvis, Elvis's long lost older bro. What else is there to say? My tongue gets tied when I try to speak, *Rickie & Aimee Monthly*, yYou're all shook up. —Jim Joyce (Rickie and Aimee, 910 Barksdale, Memphis, TN 38107)

SAVE MUSIC IN CHINATOWN: THE FIRST TWO YEARS

\$?, 5½" x 8½", ink-jet printed, 53 pgs.

It's a well-known fact that music and arts classes are the first to be cut in a lot of public schools. The importance of kids having these classes as outlets to express themselves and get in touch with their artistic side is extremely important, and yet often neglected. The "Save Music in Chinatown" project is an event that features several seasoned musicians and well-known bands, then uses its profits to maintain and fund the music program at Castelar Elementary School, found in Chinatown, Los Angeles, CA. Chronicling more than eight shows over the course of two years, this zine features copies of each fundraiser's flyer and photos of

from the label: Hummingbird Of Death, Backslider, Deathrats, Beartrap, and more. TLALX also includes photos, a discography, and stories told by various people who have worked with To Live A Lie. Will ends the zine with some comments about how the label has had a positive impact on his life. All in all, this is a fairly complete look at the label and proof that, once again, DIY punk takes all forms and can really empower individuals to live a more fulfilling life. Even though I wasn't familiar with the label, kudos to them for making it ten years and not burning out! —Kurt Morris (TLAL, 2825 Van Dyke Ave., Raleigh, NC 27607)

PARANOIZE #39, \$2 USD ppd., 5½" x 8½", copied, 18 pgs.

Based out of New Orleans, La., *Paranoize* is a music and "scene report" publication. Originally covering only the music scene in New Orleans, recent issues have branched out to Mississippi and Tennessee bands, and opened to interviewing and reviewing bands from anywhere. This issue features interviews with bands Six Pack, Terminal Nation, Torture Garden, Baghead, and Desecrator. The "New Orleans Scene Report" page is an extensive list of bands in the area and their recent releases, local fests, and upcoming and future music releases. One cool highlight about this zine is that if you've missed previous issues, you can order a wide back catalog on their website, or download PDFs for free! —Tricia Ramos (Paranoize, PO Box 2334, Marrero, LA 70073, paranoizenola.com)





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BOOK REVIEWS



Berzerkoids

By MP Johnson, 146 pgs.

The world of MP Johnson's excellent short story collection is littered with the grotesque: inside-out humans playing nose flutes, chest cavities forming gateways to dimensions filled with intelligent caterpillars, zombified hardcore bands reuniting to play their rare tracks. I know it sounds obvious—or redundant, or both—to say that his work is full of twists, but bear with me.

Like the best purveyors of magical realism, MP Johnson is able to create ■ initial mood and tone with ■ few deft strokes. His writing is sometimes grounded in the present day, like the handful of stories populated by knuckle-tat punks past their prime, or drag queens struggling through multiple iterations of identity. Other times, his weird horror is front and center, ■ in the story titled *I Summoned A Demon with a Vagina Mouth*,

so simple. MP Johnson's work is disgusting and hilarious and unsettling and poetic and resonant and genre-bending and heavy and deft. And awesome. —Michael T. Fournier (Bizarro Pulp Press, bizarropulp.com)

Everyone Loves You Back

By Louie Cronin, 253 pgs.

I may not be the most impartial person to review this. I've met the author, Louie Cronin, when she did a reading here in Boston with Sean Carswell, who runs Gorsky Press, the publishing company that released this book. (As many of you know, Gorsky is the publishing arm of *Razorcake*.) Cronin was delightful and friendly. Additionally, this story takes place where I live (Boston) and often hang out (Cambridge). That aspect especially drew me in to the content.

Everyone Loves You Back is a fictional tale of Bob Boland, a radio engineer (and not to be confused with NPR's Bob Boilen), whose story bears a striking resemblance to what I imagine my life would've been in ten years had I not met my girlfriend. Bob is forty-eight years old and lives alone in the house he inherited from his parents in Cambridge, near Harvard University. It's 1997 and the city is gentrifying. While Bob can barely keep his own house from falling apart, there's a fight to save ■ rare Japanese maple tree from being destroyed due to condo development. He has one neighbor who wants him to get rid of his trees that she thinks are no better than weeds, while another neighbor constantly feeds the squirrels that are infesting Bob's house. And yet another neighbor is installing a meditation garden and wants Bob to give up some of his land for that purpose. Meanwhile, Bob is trying to keep his head above water in his career, his writing, and his romantic relationships.

Everyone Loves You Back raises interesting questions: who are we and when do we really grow up? As more people put off relationships, marriage, and having a family until later in life, not to mention understanding what the right "career" is for them; when is it we really come into our own? Do we just kind of wing it and hope for the best? While Bob's story takes place over the course of less than one year in his life, we're able to watch him finally come into his own (or at least as close ■ he might ever get), amidst all his failed attempts, insecurities, and screw-ups. Despite my close proximity to the setting (which brought me delight ■ I read familiar street names), I believe these messages are things all readers can truly enjoy. —Kurt Morris (Gorsky Press, PO Box 42024, LA, CA 90042)

Punk's power isn't so much its ability to change the world, but rather its ability to change an individual.

—Kurt Morris, *Global Punk: Resistance and Rebellion in Everyday Life*

the first scene of which is exactly what you're envisioning. Regardless of the particularly story, I came to expect something weird and disgusting in each and was not disappointed. But the horrific elements in his work aren't the terminus of storytelling. Each terror, each gross-out in *Berzerkoids* is load-bearing and there to further the story's work rather than to serve as ■ centerpiece. Johnson loves the shock of each story, but he *does stuff* with the shock. In *Through Time*, *Knuckles First*, for example, ■ decaying alien head attaches itself to Geoff, the story's protagonist. They travel into the future to save Geoff's future daughter, who turns out to be his son in drag. From there, after settling into the initial weirdness, I was shocked (see?) to find not one, but two twists, both enhanced by the setup.

Stories full of zombies and aliens and vampires require ■ certain amount of splatter, and Johnson is more than happy to oblige, spraying guts'n'rot liberally across this collection, playing fast and loose with description and syntax. This too, is a choice. *The Songwriter's Fingers* is the shortest story herein, and also the most intricately wrought. Its gleaming prose and poetic aftershocks seamless fit to any hoity-toity MFA program's best. Similarly poetic and no less affecting is *Feed My Corpse to Sharks*, less ■ requisite gross-out than ■ straightforward meditation on the metaphysics of loss. Just when you think you have MP Johnson pinned down, in other words, he mixes it up again, to ■ staggering effect.

I've read all of Stephen King's stuff and know Lovecraft a little bit, but beyond that I have no real stake in the horror business. Yet calling MP Johnson a horror writer is like calling Black Flag a hardcore band—it's not

Global Punk: Resistance and Rebellion in Everyday Life

By Kevin Dunn, 262 pgs.

This is a strange book. It's strange for a book about punk and it's even stranger for an academic book about punk. It's strange because I can see myself in it. I've never experienced that with any other punk book, academic or otherwise. *Global Punk* is filled with people I know, contemporary punk bands I like (or at least have heard of), and theoretic models I respect. It feels intimate. I believe that anyone actively involved in DIY punk rock will experience this intimacy. The intimacy comes ■ not directly through the book's engagement with bands I like and people I know, but from the equal treatment it gives to various iterations of DIY punk globally, and the threads that unite them.

Equally strange is the book's starting point. It's evident from the first page that *Global Punk* isn't ■ nostalgia project, ■ dispassionate analysis, nor ■ attempt at definition or periodization. This alone knocks off the vast majority of books about punk. This project is ■ self-professed defense of DIY punk and why it matters. Kevin speaks about punks in almost the same way that Marx talks about the proletariat. Marx is very careful not to identify the proletariat as ■ class, but as the oppositional body to class structure. Similarly, *Global Punk* doesn't attempt to change or define punk as a specific genre or discrete community, but describes how DIY punk is principally ■ oppositional identity (within capitalism) that's empowering for individuals and the communities they comprise.

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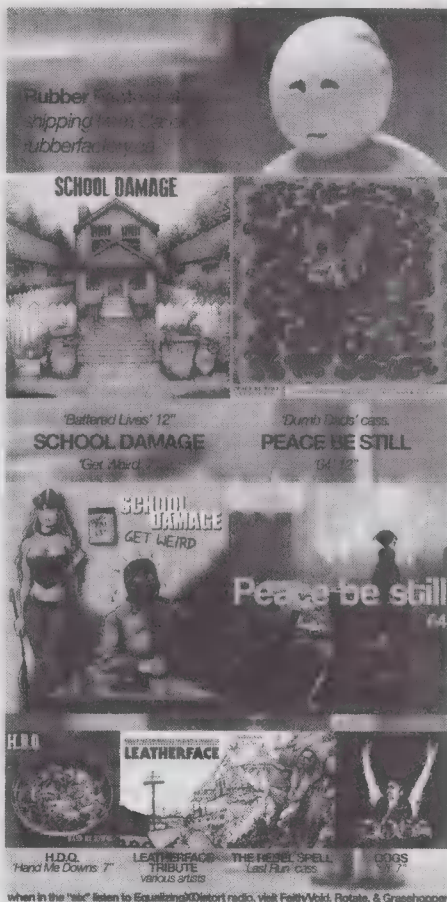
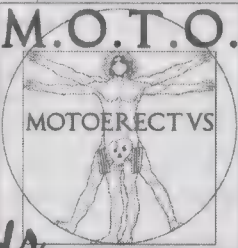


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Global Punk scrambles familiar coordinates. It's not a book about punk music per se, nor is it a book about youth culture. *Global Punk* carefully transverse different scenes and finds within them methods, principles, practices, and voices of political resistance. It aims to show the material consequences of the heterogeneous expressions of this oppositional identity. How does geography, political climate, mainstream appropriation, established distribution networks, housing laws, recording format, et cetera, effect how this oppositional identity is expressed? The material consequences of ■ Green Day CD in the hands of a thirty-year-old at a mall in Wisconsin in 1995 can be entirely different than in the hands of a fifteen-year-old in Jakarta in 2002. At every turn, Kevin highlights the currents and eddies of resistance within punk and how they crack and rupture capitalist ideology and infrastructure.

While Kevin is an academic and the book is definitely ■ work of political theory, the accessibility and tone of *Global Punk* are for anyone interested in DIY punk. Kevin introduces theory out of utility and necessity, not out of habit or fashionability. Kevin's voice is present throughout the

■ trance." While Dunn relates this to zines and specifically punk zines, I'd argue that punk, in general, does just that. One of the messages of this book, intended or not, is that punk has the power to transform and change lives. During my time reading *Global Punk*, I was surprised at how uplifted and empowered I felt. I'd guess that Dunn wasn't thinking he was writing a self-help book, but reading stories of how punk has given agency to people—and continues to do so—of all sorts of backgrounds throughout the world gave this reader some hope in the midst of an all too depressing world. —Kurt Morris (Bloomsbury, 1385 Broadway, NY, NY 10018)

Invisible Man, Got the Whole World Watching

By Mychal Denzel Smith, 240 pgs.

On June 14, 2016, Nation Books published *Invisible Man, Got the Whole World Watching—A Young Black Man's Education*, in which author Mychal Denzel Smith calls out basketball legend Michael Jordan for being apolitical and uninvolved in the black community's struggle, unlike Muhammad Ali and even—as Smith makes an impassioned case—LeBron James.

Courtesy of bands like MDC, music became not just a passive way to pass the time, but a tool to sandblast off the shiny veneer of bullshit we're fed daily. Music as a weapon to speak the truth—loud and clear—to power.

—Jimmy Alvarado, *MDC: Memoir from a Damaged Civilization*

piece, making for ■ atypical academic book. An active participant in DIY punk and ■ world traveler, Kevin doesn't shy away from including personal stories when they add to the discussion. And with chapter titles like "Satan Wears ■ Bra While Sniffin' Glue and Eating Razorcake," *Global Punk* clearly contains ■ fair amount of humor. The totality of all these elements reflects Kevin's love of DIY punk and optimism for its future. *Global Punk* may never be a bestseller and will long be overshadowed by books like *Our Band Could Be Your Life*, but, for me, it will be the book I buy for friends, and revisit for years to come.

Highly recommended. —Matthew Hart (Bloomsbury, 1385 Broadway, New York, NY 10018, bloomsbury.com)

Global Punk: Resistance and Rebellion in Everyday Life

By Kevin Dunn, 262 pgs.

It's only fair to start this review stating that the author of *Global Punk*, Kevin Dunn, is ■ contributor to *Razorcake*, although I've never met him. The title may be somewhat misleading, as there's no possible way (short of ■ multi-volume encyclopedia) that one can make ■ comprehensive look at punk around the world. The subtitle gives the reader ■ better understanding of where Dunn is headed with the material. He believes that, "DIY punk provides individuals and local communities with resources for self-empowerment and political resistance."

Despite an academic press putting out this book, don't be discouraged from picking up *Global Punk*. While there is some theory involved in the discussion of punk as ■ source of rebellion and defiance, much of this book strikes the right mix of intellectual and accessible. During the academic analysis of punk, I struggled to be engaged, but an engaging narrative rescued me, telling the stories of riot grrrls, punks in Indonesia, or even this here zine. Dunn has performed an incredible number of interviews with individuals involved with music scenes around the world. Their firsthand accounts give *Global Punk* legitimacy. While I normally dislike hearing the author inject themselves into ■ book, Dunn's energy and excitement—as well as his personal experiences—come through and give the reader encouragement and hope that punk is still strong.

Dunn argues throughout the book that punk's power isn't so much its ability to change the world, but rather its ability to change ■ individual. He paraphrases anarchist author Hakim Bey in writing "perhaps success should be measured by the degree to which people are knocked out of

On July 25 2016, Jordan publicly stated that he "can no longer stay silent," regarding the deaths of black people at the hands of police officers and the deaths of police officers at the hands of snipers. Jordan also stated that he will donate a million dollars each to the International Association of Chiefs of Police's Institute for Community-Police Relations and the NAACP Legal Defense Fund. While 2016 has been notably plagued with shootings of people of color and police officers, his statement didn't immediately follow any of them, and I have to wonder if Smith's book made its way to Jordan. It's not out of the question. *Invisible Man, Got the Whole World Watching* is Smith's travelogue of the road to his awakening: racially, politically and culturally. The road is marked with events, like the Iraq War and Hurricane Katrina and TV shows like *The Boondocks* and *Chappelle's Show*, which through Smith's eyes, we see in entirely new light.

Regarding Barack Obama, empathy is an unaffordable luxury. Smith has use for neither Obama's tough love for the black community, nor his occasional encouragement to consider how the world looks through the eyes of Angry White Guy. *Invisible Man, Got the Whole World Watching* is a slim book that has the spirit of ■ political pamphlet. It's a screed made more readable with the help of a personal narrative. It's rare to have one's eyes opened so widely for relatively little effort. —Jim Woster (Nation Books, publicaffairsbooks.com/nation-books)

MDC: Memoir from a Damaged Civilization

By Dave Dictor, 192 pgs.

MDC—Millions Of Dead Cops, Metal Devil Cokes, Missile Destroyed Civilization, and many others—are one of those "Punk 101" bands the average punter these days will likely get around to once they've made the commitment to investigate this punk thang a little further than whatever their entry-level band was. They ■ also a great "foundation" band for such folks 'cause, truth be told, those entering from the more popular routes these days are likely coming in with no idea whatsoever of punk's long-standing history as a viable form of dissent, political action, and source for obfuscated information.

I speak from personal experience. I picked up MDC's *Multi-Death Corporations* EP in 1983 with its horrifying images and detailed information about what the American military were doing to predominantly indigenous people during El Salvador's then-happening civil war at the behest of U.S.-

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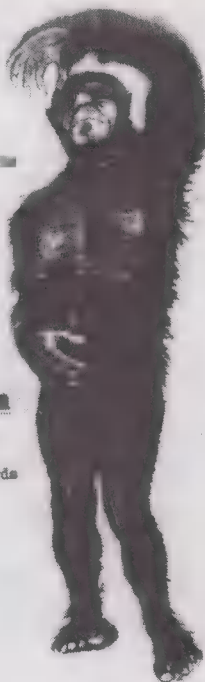
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Courtesy of bands like MDC, music became not just ■ passive way to pass the time, but ■ tool to sandblast off the shiny veneer of bullshit we're fed daily. Music ■■■■ weapon to speak the truth—loud and clear—to power.

As inferred in the title, vocalist Dave Dictor recounts his, and his band's, history here. The book tells his beginnings—the familial and formative experiences that influenced his worldview. Me moves from New York to Austin, Texas, where he quickly became involved with Austin's storied punk scene. The band forms. Assorted band-related and personal experiences happen, including run-ins with police and hassles caused by the best-known Millions Of Dead Cops iteration of the band's name. Health and drug-related issues rear up. Dave becomes ■ teacher. Ultimately, he finds his center. His prose is simple and conversational. Overall, the book is ■ quick read despite recounting one of punk rock's more storied lives.

Some may wish for more introspection into why he and the band were motivated to ■ more caustic lyrical and musical end of punk and why he's remained entrenched in the scene (particularly the do-it-yourself part of it) as long as he has. Yet, I think there's enough here to whet the appetite of the average fan. This book serves as an example of how living a life in open revolt to the status quo remains possible—even in an ■■■■ when corporations have a stranglehold on pretty much all aspects of our waking lives. —Jimmy Alvarado (Manic D Press, PO Box 410804, SF, CA 94141)

My Damage: The Story of a Punk Rock Survivor

By Keith Morris with Jim Ruland, 336 pgs.

I'm a pretty gnarly music biography fan—music autobiographies, even more so. Early rumblings about Keith Morris's plans to flesh out ■ collected work of his history more than interested me right away. He's ■ fellow born and raised Angeleno who has been a definitive, driving force from punk rock's hardcore infancy back in the sordid '70s to date. If I have to tell you who Keith Morris is or what he's done over the years, do me a solid and roll up this magazine ■■■■ tight as you ■■■■ and repeatedly swat yourself in the mouth with it. What made me

raise my other eyebrow was finding out that our very own Jim Ruland was right beside Morris the entire time of putting this book together. Ruland helped wrangle the memories and stories as well ■ researched the fuck out of ■ hell of a lot of history these pages have waiting for you to discover. Let me tell you, there's quite ■ bit here, even for the most steadfast fan. As a writer, Ruland knows his shit better than the most renowned of proctologists.

That said, I couldn't stop reading, and sure enough, *My Damage*, was finished in ■ couple of days. Let ■■■■ be clear ■■ fucking crystal, I really don't want to delve into the nuts and bolts specifics of Keith's growing up and complete doings here, ■■ it would ruin the discoveries you read along each chronologically placed chapter. And that ain't some slip-shod, half-assed reviewing cop-out when I say that, either. I honestly don't want to fuck up the stories for all y'all.

I will say, however, that there were a good number of shenanigans had during Morris's early years, all while growing up in Hermosa Beach, Calif. and putting his first two bands together a bit later on. (This alone would make ■ great mini-series on HBO, but that's just one guy's opinion.) Yet, the headstrong connective theme here is how true Morris remained to music after all these years, from recording and performing to this very day (at sixty-one years old, no less!), to managing and helping out ■ grip of other bands he felt needed to be shared with the rest of us.

Whatever area of the spectrum you happen to fall ■■■■ fan, this book will most certainly inform, entertain, and really help put into perspective what it's like to be one of the most recognized frontmen in punk rock. As you're reading, you can hear it being read in Keith's distinctive voice, just like Morgan Freeman whenever he narrates whatever the fuck it is you're listening to. Well done, Keith and Jim. Well done, indeed. — Designated Dale (Da Capo Press, 44 Farnsworth St, 3rd Fl. Boston, MA 02210, dacapopress.com)

Neon Green

By Margaret Wappler, 276 pgs.

Many readers read Charles Dickens's novels and initially conclude he was a satirist, then later realize that the journalist-turned-novelist

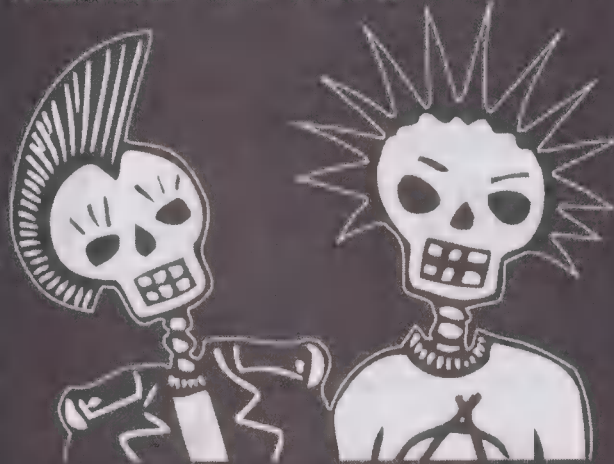
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—Jim Joyce, *Out of the Basement*

was reporting what he was seeing. Margaret Wappler's novel *Neon Green* opens at a family picnic in suburban Chicago in 1994. Ernest, the earnest environmentalist father, warns a stranger that using lighter fluid on charcoal leads to the consumption of the fluid's toxins—meanwhile, Ernest's own pristine charcoal refuses to ignite. We're obviously reading a satire, except as we get to know the world of the novel, Ernest seems more and more reasonable.

Also, there's a spaceship. In 1969, the U.S. had made contact with life on Jupiter, and twenty-five years later, Ernest's son Gabe secretly enters a sweepstakes that earns the family a Jupiterian flying saucer parked in their backyard.

But this isn't science fiction, except in the most technical sense of the term. It's not even magic realism. *Neon Green* is a suburban novel about the environment and disease that features a spaceship, an enigma that the family—under Ernest's orders—attempts to figure out with the help of a logbook of the ship's actions.

It's a first novel, and has those first-novel passages that the reader must push against to finish to return to an otherwise compelling story. A suburban novel about the environment, disease, and a spaceship: it's heartening that we still have presses, however small, that publish books that, at first glance, are going to deflect a lot of readers. I can't imagine I would have sought it out had I not read Wappler's essay on King Crimson in *Yes Is the Answer*, a collection of prog-rock writing (also published by a small press). —Jim Woster (Unnamed Press, unnamedpress.com)

Out of the Basement: From Cheap Trick to DIY Punk in Rockford, Illinois 1973-2005

By David A. Ensminger

David A. Ensminger understands that most folks only know of Rockford, Ill. as the home of Cheap Trick. *Out of the Basement*, a part of Microcosm's *Scene History Series*, hopes to widen our view of Illinois's third largest city. Ensminger follows Rockford's '70s rock scene into the explosion of '80s punk culture with groups like PineWood Box and Bludgeoned Nun. The latter chapters move into the '90s and early 2000s, when gig organizers like Barb Orr watched the scene go from the usual rough and tumble weirdness to a time when one had to navigate the bratty behavior of rising stars like Green Day (who put Orr into debt one night by demanding more than their previously agreed upon payout).

Punk anecdotes aside, Ensminger bookends *Out of the Basement* with some research on the demographics and economics of Rockford. He's done his homework, and the punk history comes in a context that will make sense for any younger readers who are coming at this whole Rust Belt thing blindly. If you're from the Midwest, Ensminger's work makes for fun reading. And if you can't tell Illinois from Indiana on a map, *Out of the Basement* is a cool study of how many American cities struggle to keep their DIY talent from either destroying themselves in an environment with below average social services or leaving town for the nearby Chicagos, both of which result in what Ensminger calls, "A brain drain on the remaining population." Read it, hop on I-90, and don't stop until you see a Beef-A-Roo. —Jim Joyce (Microcosm, 2752 N. Williams Ave., Portland, OR 97227)



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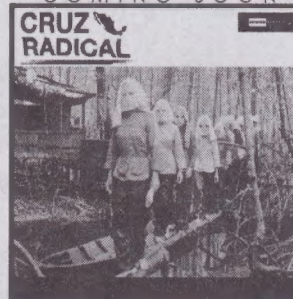
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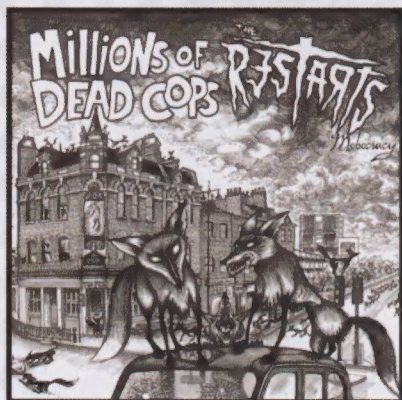
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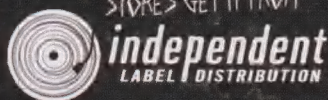


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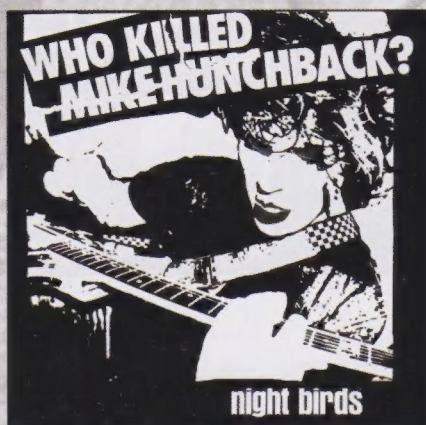
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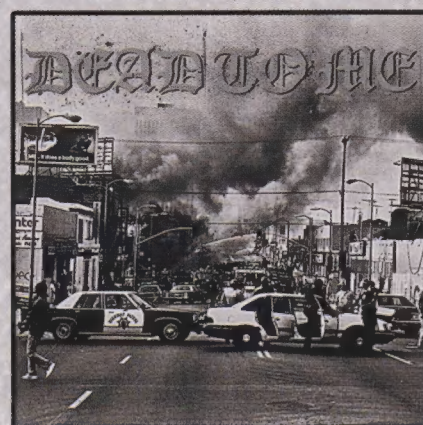


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